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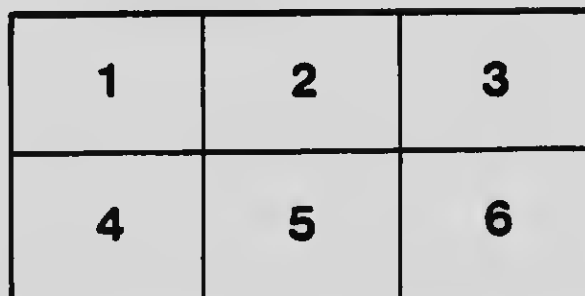
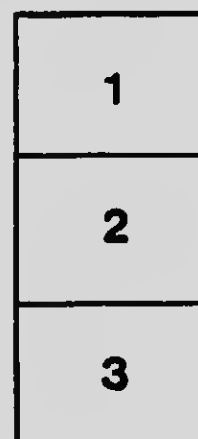
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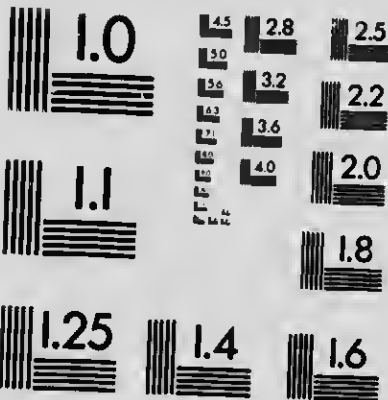
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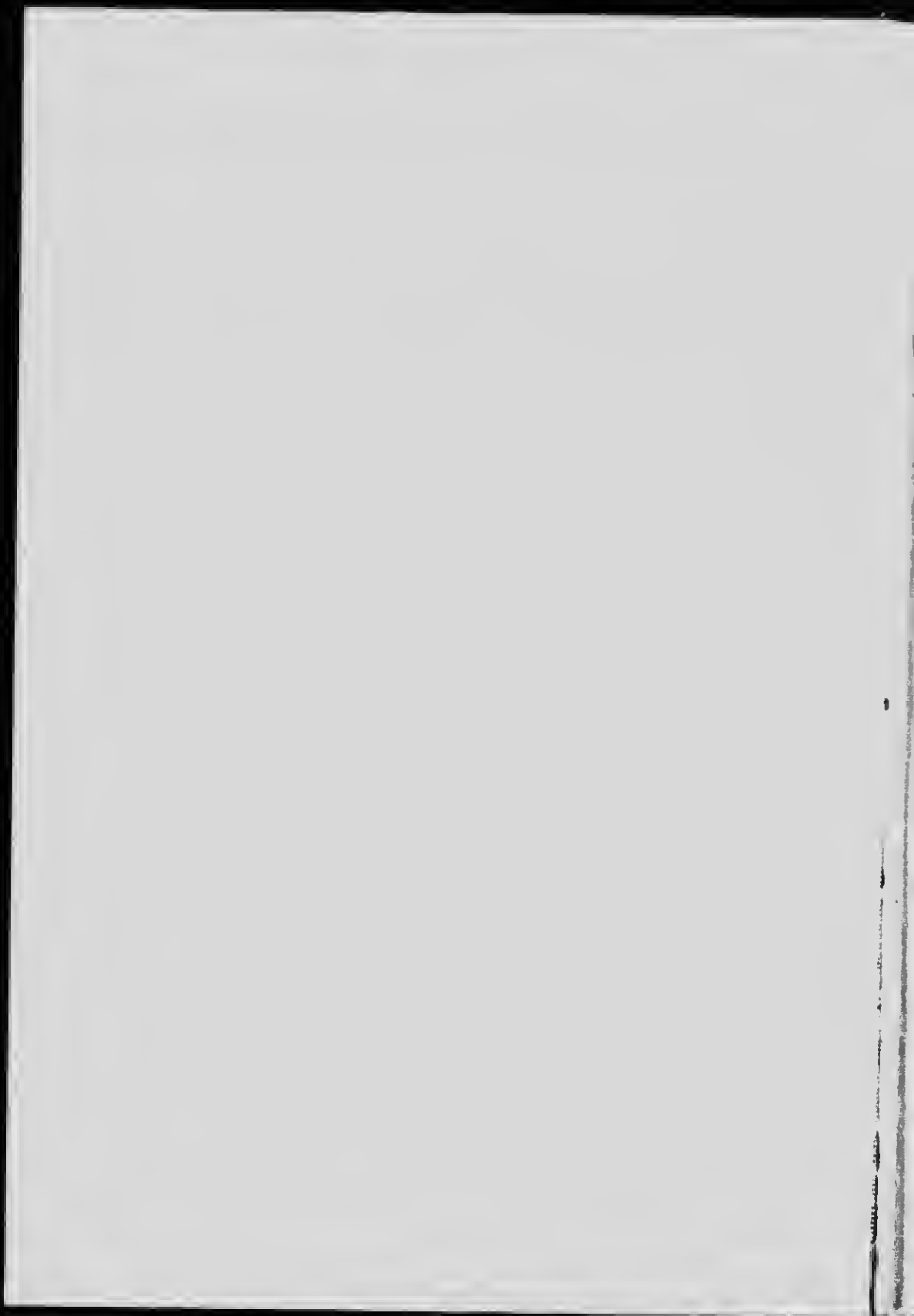
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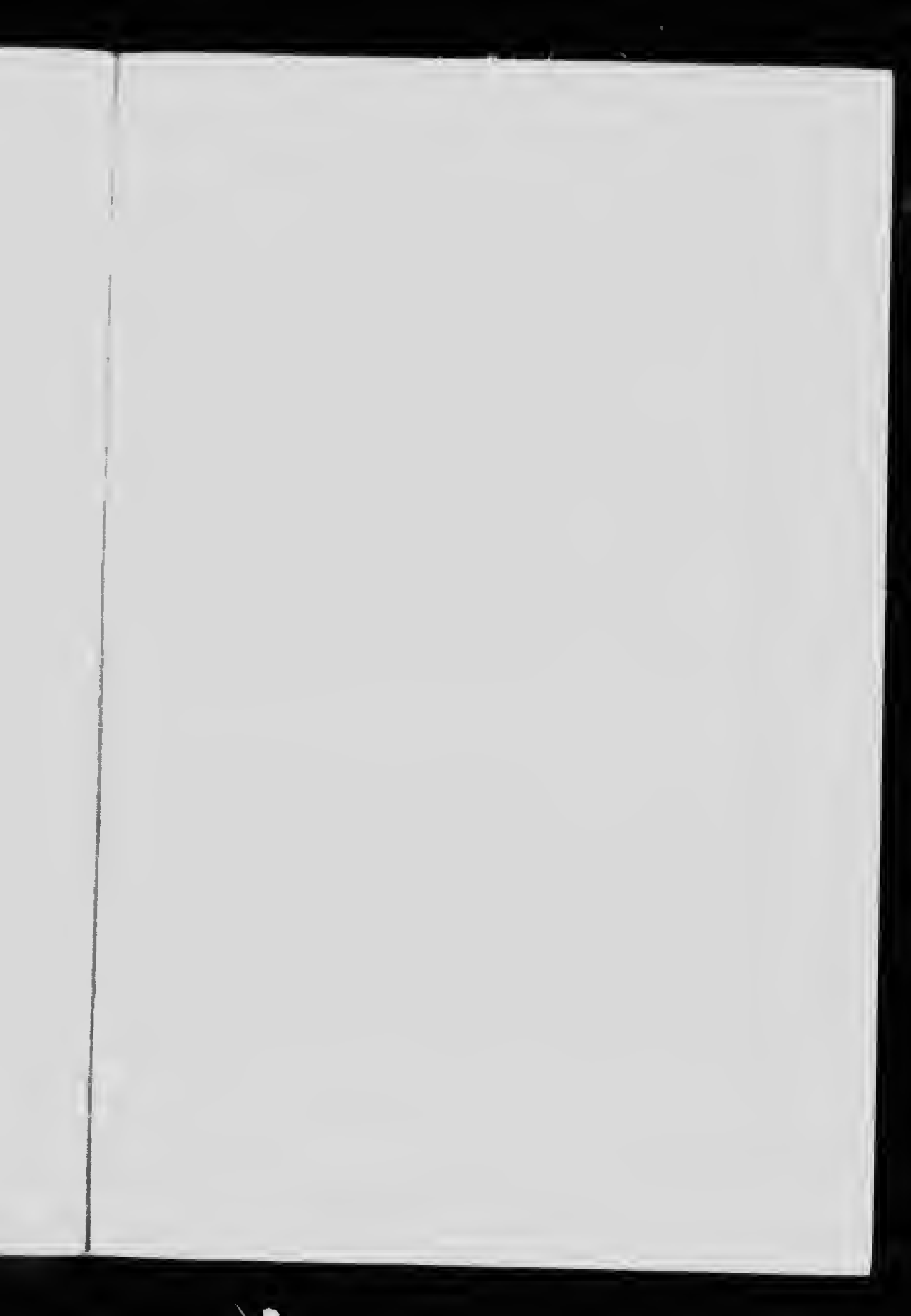




THE HEAD COACH









“She knows some of the players and—and—is personally interested in them.”

# THE HEAD COACH

BY

RALPH D. PAINE

Author of "College Years"

ILLUSTRATED BY

GEORGE WRIGHT

TORONTO

McLEOD & ALLEN

PUBLISHERS



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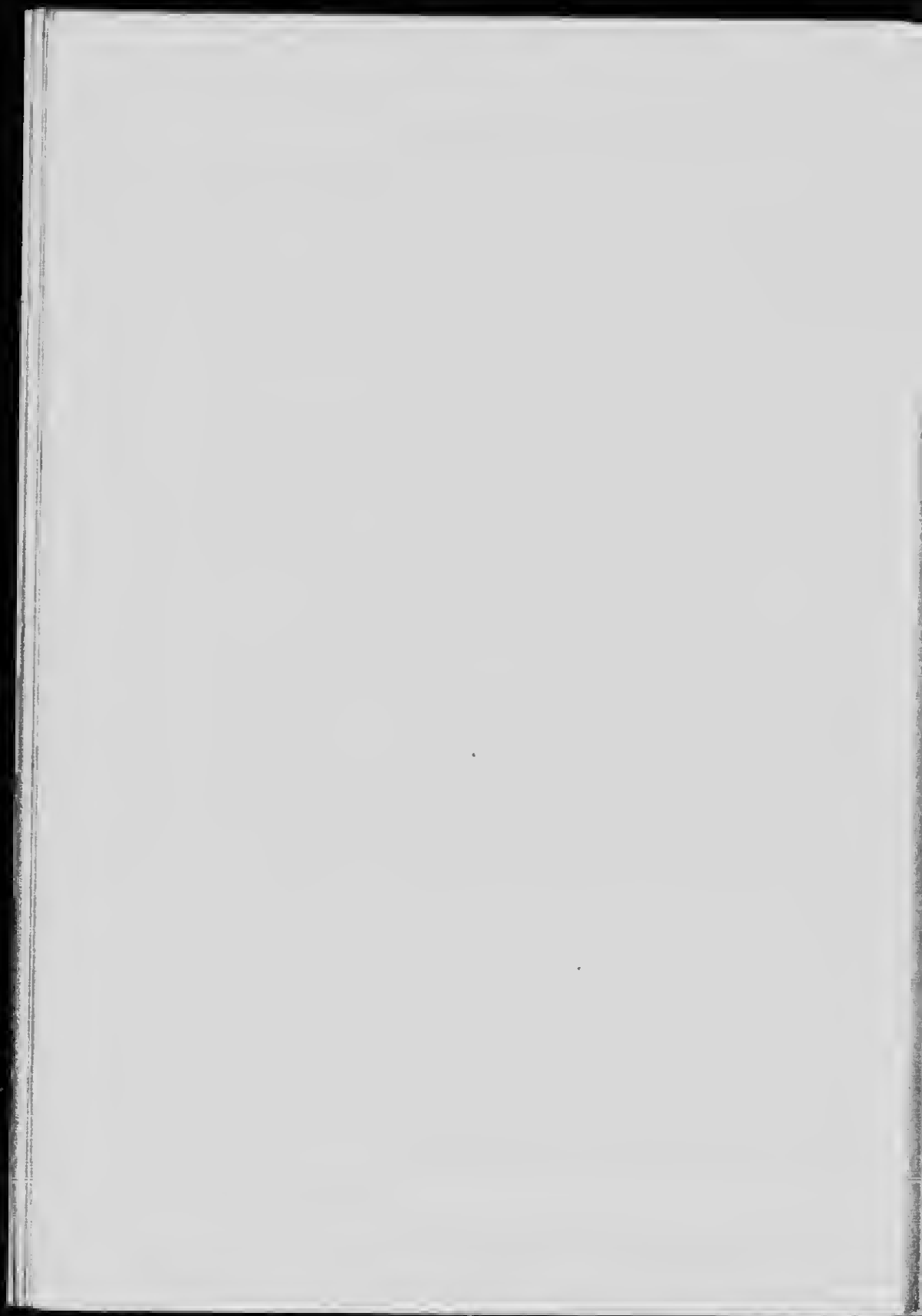
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**THE HEAD COACH**



## CHAPTER I

### THE CENTRE RUSH

"WE shall have to shift you back to the second eleven, 'Deacon.' I am awfully sorry; no need to tell you that, for I know you have been a college wheel-horse these last three seasons, and your thankless work ought to be rewarded."

"All right, sir; but it did look as if I might get my chance this year," was George Kingsland's reply to the coach, and the disappointed centre rush made no other comment as he walked from the field after the day's practice. His face was so thoroughly plastered with mud and with blood from a scratch on his cheek as to mask the signs of whatever emotions were in his heart, but as he trudged alone toward the training-house, he brushed the torn sleeve of his jersey across his eyes and winked several times with much energy.

Through two foot-ball seasons to have done one's battering duty as the mainstay of the "scrub," or second eleven, then to have won a place on the university team at the latter end of the third season, and now at the eleventh hour to be reduced to the

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ranks made a tragic kind of misfortune which jolted a man right down to the foundation of things, particularly when he took foot-ball as seriously as did "Deacon" Kingsland. For that matter, he studied as hard as he played. If life is a battleground, he was a youth early on the firing-line, viewing his college days as so many skirmishes in which he strove to acquit himself with credit, not so much in the hope of glory as for the satisfaction of trying to do the best that was in him. Such men as he are to be found on every college campus, but they make little noise and do not resemble the popular idea of the careless and racketsy undergraduate. These quiet, hard-working fellows are the ballast of the crowd, however, which seldom fails to admire and honor them.

The Yale coaches had decided that this stocky, compact Kingsland was not heavy enough to buttress the centre of the rush line against the mountainous champions selected to face him by Princeton and Harvard. And after grave and prolonged discussion, as befitting so important a matter, it was decreed to retire him in favor of one "Josh" Yates, a tall youth of more imposing presence and swifter style of play. What grieved the deposed Kingsland as much as anything else was expressed in his muttered soliloquy as he drew near the dressing-rooms.

## THE CENTRE RUSH

"It would not hit me quite so hard if they had not kept me on the 'varsity two whole weeks. Everybody thought the eleven had been finally selected. Why, the newspapers even published my picture. If I don't carry as much beef as Josh Yates, I just know I can play him off his feet in a punishing championship game. But they won't give me a chance to make good."

Kingsland tramped into the room reserved for the university eleven and began to strip off his steaming, muddy gear with melancholy realization of the fact that on the morrow he must betake himself and his belongings from these exclusive quarters back among the inglorious ruck of the "scrub" players. As he jumped from under the cold shower, the negro "rubber" hastened to attend him with an air of bustling solicitude.

"Don't put yourself out, William," drawled Kingsland. "I no longer travel with the elec. I have been fired, chucked, discharged from your august company. I don't want to deceive you."

The perspiring attendant tucked the rough towels under his arm, wagged a sympathetic head, sighed to suit the occasion, and feelingly replied:

"I'se suttinly dumfounded to hear it, Mistah Kingsland. I t'ought you was sholy one of us 'varsity men fo' keeps. Co'se I don't want you to



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ketch cold, but if you'll 'scuse me, mebbe I better rub down dese other players first."

No longer was Kingsland to be waited on and petted and admired. Even in the eyes of this humble servitor he had already lost caste, and he smiled sorrowfully to himself. Another day and fickle William would be obsequiously hovering about Josh Yates as a new-fledged hero. While Kingsland was drying himself without assistance, the captain of the team whacked him across the bare back and cried heartily:

"Tough luck, old man, but everybody knows that no trouble is big enough to make you turn a hair. Of course you will stay right in here with us as substitute centre. What do you mean by tumbling your clothes out of that locker as if you were going to pack up and move?"

"I didr't want to be in the way, for one thing," growled the other. "And William eyes me with polite contempt as a has-been. It makes me nervous to be treated that way."

"Oh, nonsense, 'Deacon.' The team needs you with it all the time, whether you play or not. You are a kind of sheet-anchor to have round, you know." The captain lowered his voice and added, "I want you to understand that Wallace Kemp and the other graduate coaches overruled me in your case. They don't know you as well as I do. Give me your

## THE CENTRE RUSH

hundred and seventy pounds at centre every time, even if Josh Yates does strip at two hundred and ten. I am not altogether sure that he is—oh, well, it is not good discipline for me to say anything more about him. But I want you to know where I stand.”

“Thanks, old man. I know what you came near saying about Josh Yates. But no matter. You will never hear it from me.”

Kingsland dressed in slow, absent-minded fashion and kept aloof from his comrades, preferring to walk to the campus instead of riding with them in the omnibus. He was thinking of all the drudgery and toil he had endured in his Freshman and Sophomore years, and now as a Junior; playing for all he was worth to help train other centre rushes to win their way to the first eleven. Until now the men against whom he had pitted himself were better than he, and their success had not embittered him.

In the case of Josh Yates, however, this bull-dog of a “Deacon” Kingsland could not help feeling that the cards were unfairly dealt. The two men had been playing against each other throughout the season, shifting from the “scrub” to the ‘varsity and back again in a duel to win the title to the position. Ungrudgingly Kingsland confessed to himself that this other man had more brute strength, and when fully aroused could make more havoc in a rush line.

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He was easily hurt, however, too easily hurt in the opinion of Kingsland, who had played through a game with a broken collar-bone, and was never known to quit until he had to be carried from the field. The discarded centre rush set his teeth hard, and his blue eyes snapped as he recalled a day when Yates had purposely kicked him in a tangled scrimmage. Kingsland had made no comment, but later in the fray he hammered the offender until that gigantic young man begged him to "let up on him." This episode, of itself, was enough to convince the indomitable "Deacon" that his rival had a soft streak.

"He has fooled the coaches," murmured Kingsland, as he swung toward the campus with vigorous, untiring strides, "but he never fooled me from the first day he came on the field. He does not like foot-ball. He dreads every practice, and it takes all his will power to pretend that he wants to play the game. He is such a big, blustering, imposing lad that he has not been found out. If the Princeton centre should happen to give him one hard punch in the nose, he would curl up like a yellow pup with no more fight in him. All of which is none of my business, to be sure."

Kingsland was not a man to brood long over misfortune. There was nothing in his demeanor to indicate that he was greatly downcast. His

## THE CENTRE RUSH

stubborn chin was held well up, and he eyed the world at large with a kind of resolute challenge, as if he were in the habit of finding obstacles in his pathway and rather enjoyed the stress of trying to conquer them. It was because of his clean, unflinching manliness that the college called him "Deacon"; nor did he in the least realize how militant an influence for good he had been without preaching, without conscious effort. As an athlete he had been of invaluable service, perhaps more so than if he were one of the university eleven. It was he who had made of the "scrub" team a well-disciplined, hard-fighting force, with its own *esprit de corps*, infused it with his own aggressive spirit, and welded it into an opposition that compelled the regulars to make a pitched battle of the day's practice in order to avert defeat. A gleam of satisfaction came to him in this hour of smarting disappointment, and he reflected with a twinkle:

"I may get my revenge by speeding up my trusty scrubs until they give the 'varsity one good square licking before the Princeton game. At any rate, Josh Yates is going to know that he has been playing foot-ball every time I line up against him."

There remained only a week of hard practice before the Princeton game, and the gates of the field were locked and guarded while the 'varsity team was put through signal drills and secret stratagems

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which were expected to astonish the enemy by the novelty of their attack. So shrewdly did "Deacon" Kingsland's slashing scrubs foil and disrupt these complicated formations that the coaches looked perplexed and unhappy. "Straight, old-fashioned foot-ball" was Kingsland's plan of action, and he frequently quoted to his men, with a delighted grin, the remark credited to one Denny O'Neil, a herculean novice from the Law School, who waved the coaches aside while he indignantly protested:

"The divil take your tricks and your stratagems! Show me my man and let me at him!"

Day after day Kingsland lined up against Josh Yates at centre and forced him to exert himself to the utmost. The 'varsity player's game steadily improved with this rough schooling, for Kingsland was so staunchly loyal to the college that he taught Yates many valuable things hammered out of his own experience, in order to make of him as effective a centre as possible. After all, as the "Deacon" reasoned it, beating Princeton and Harvard was the supreme issue.

The Yale coaches were biased in favor of "beef in the rush line," and they valued Josh Yates chiefly because of the forty pounds by which he overmatched the intelligent, active chunk of a Kingsland. In his heart the "Deacon" was more and more inclined to the belief that Yates was a quitter,

## THE CENTRE RUSH

and he systematically taunted and pestered the big fellow to arouse his fighting spirit, now and then slapping his face with cheerful comment in this wise:

"Why don't you try to knock my head off, eh? I'd respect you for it. The Princeton centre is a regular man-eater. He has orders to cripple you in the first five minutes of play. You claim you are overtrained. Bah! you are sandless! That is what ails *you*."

At such insults as these Yates flushed, tried to be more aggressive, and made clumsy efforts at retaliation, like a horse that needs spurring to keep it up to its best gait. His superior weight and height enabled him to maintain a creditable showing, and the coaches showed no intention of making more changes in the rush line. Kingsland said nothing, but he was worrying about this weak spot in the eleven, and more than ever his heart was heavy with regret that he was denied the fighting chance for which he had so long striven.

On the day before the Princeton game, which was to be contested in New Haven, the Yale team was taken to a small country town where a well-appointed inn offered a quiet night for sleep and a little respite from the tense, tumultuous atmosphere of the campus. As a substitute, Kingsland was one of the party. Outwardly cheerful, his well-poised temperament helped to check the nervous restlessness

## THE HEAD COACH

of his companions-in-arms. Late in the afternoon the captain led the squad at a leisurely gait along several miles of country roads and lanes. As they were returning to the inn, he took occasion to drop back beside "Deacon" Kingsland, who was marching along quite serenely, head in air, hands in his pockets, gazing at the autumn landscape like a man glad to be alive and out-of-doors in such brisk and bracing weather. The captain indicated with a nod the stalwart back of Josh Yates, and said:

"How do you think he looks? He seems all on edge and is peevish to beat the band. It would take very little to make him fly to pieces. I can't believe that he is overtrained, for we have taken the very best of care of him."

"It isn't right for me to say what I think," replied Kingsland, looking the captain very straight in the face. "You have been playing with him right along. You ought to know him as well as I do. I am not choosing the team for to-morrow's game."

The captain appeared as if the situation were a trifle awkward and hastened to say, with an effort to seem at ease:

"Oh, never mind. I thought—that is, you have been playing opposite him, and everybody sort of turns to you for advice about 'most any old thing, 'Deacon.' Would you call it—I mean, do you think he has a yellow streak?"

## THE CENTRE RUSH

Kingsland shrugged his solid shoulders and surveyed the landscape for some time. When he spoke his tones were emphatic:

"You and I are good friends, none better. But I was kicked off your eleven in favor of Josh Yates, and I should be a nice-looking kind of a chap to say anything against him to his captain. I fought him fair, and marked him black and blue in trying to teach him to play the game. And that ends it. If you think he has a yellow streak, why do you put him in against Princeton? He will find no yellow streaks in *that* rush line."

Reluctant to confess in so many words that his renewed protests had been silenced by the older coaches, the captain carried the discussion no further, and was taciturn, while Kingsland was busy with his own sagacious reflections. Soon the team was trooping in to supper, assuming a flimsy imitation of light-hearted indifference as if there were no thoughts of to-morrow. In the evening, however, there was much random sauntering on piazzas and in corridors as if it were not easy to sit long in one spot. If a door slammed, two or three robust-looking young men were apt to jump as if they had been shot at. Those who tried to play cards or checkers in the parlor fell to squabbling over the most trifling disagreements, and behaved not unlike those small children on the night before Christmas



## THE HEAD COACH

who tremulously declare that they "can't stand it one minute more without busting."

Mike Morrison, the trainer, who had shepherded many a team through these last wearing hours, soothed his fractious, high-stepping charges with infinite tact and patience, and appeared immensely relieved when the time came to pack them off to bed, after signal practice in the dining-room with a waste-basket for a foot-ball.

Kingsland went up-stairs to the room assigned him, and as he passed an open door perceived Josh Yates disconsolately eying a single bed which looked both too narrow and too short to cradle his massive proportions with any degree of comfort.

"There must have been a mistake," said Kingsland. "The rooms were somehow mixed in the shuffle. I have a four-poster in my room that is big enough to lose myself in. You can't get a decent night's rest in that little trundle-bed. You ought to have spoken to Mike Morrison about it this afternoon. Here, grab your pajamas and swap rooms with me."

Yates thanked him effusively, yet with a bewildered manner, as if this friendly interest were the last thing in the world to expect from his pugnacious rival. Kingsland smiled and stood in the doorway as if he had something more to say. It was plain to read that Yates was considerably distraught, and the

## THE CENTRE RUSH

other player felt sorry for him, suspecting as he did that this great, strapping centre rush was in the grip of panicky fear at thought of the ordeal which was so soon to test all his courage and strength and skill. Kingsland honestly loved foot-ball, the fiercer the better, and the idea that any normal youth could shrink from its physical clash and shock had never occurred to him until he was given the chance to study Josh Yates in the heat of action on the field. This was no time for bullying or intimidation, thought Kingsland, and in a genial, off-hand way he volunteered:

"I would give a year of my life for your chance to-morrow, Josh. I hope you realize what a lucky dog you are. It will be something to remember and be proud of all through your life. And playing for Yale in one of these big games means a good deal more than your own glory. You represent the college. Don't forget it for a moment. If you are tired or get hurt, don't think of yourself, but be glad of the chance to play yourself to a stand-still for the college. Ideals are what count, so the wise men tell us, and there is a mighty big, fine ideal behind a Yale foot-ball team."

Josh Yates was visibly affected, so unexpected was this kindly exhortation, and he replied very seriously:

"It does me lots of good to hear you say such

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things, 'Deacon.' I thought you had no use for me. You have said some pretty rough things to me on the field, you know. I want your good opinion. The whole college seems to swear by what you think of a man. Of course, I am going to play for all I am worth to-morrow. But I honestly believe that you ought to be in my shoes, by rights. And I am not ashamed to tell you so. I don't like foot-ball. No need of trying to hide it from you. You guessed it long ago."

"Oh, bosh," exclaimed Kingsland. "Your liking it has nothing to do with the case. Duty is not always a picnic. As big and strong a man as you are could not have kept out of the game. College sentiment wouldn't stand for your refusing to come out to practise. You had to play. Now I expect to see you go straight through both halves to-morrow and give me no chance to get into it for a minute. The coaches believe in you. Make good, Josh. You can do it."

After Yates had been tucked into the four-poster, George Kingsland sat himself down upon the edge of the single bed in the room adjoining and permitted himself the rare indulgence of a fit of the blues. He had endeavored to brace the courage and cheer the heart of the other man, while in fact he himself stood sorely in need of comfort. However brave and unselfish one may be at twenty-one,

## THE CENTRE RUSH

his dearest ambition cannot be thwarted without some very poignant suffering, and Kingsland felt that he had been supplanted by a less deserving man. Trying to hold fast to the view that whatever the coaches wished was the best thing to be done, he went to bed and dutifully tried to sleep.

## CHAPTER II

### A PROBLEM OF DUTY

THE inn had become singularly quiet. Although the hour was by no means late in the evening, there was no loud talk or laughter among the coaches and other guests down-stairs. In a dozen bedrooms wakeful young men were staring at the ceiling, striving to think of anything else in the world than the contest, but, like homing pigeons, their thoughts came flocking back to the Princeton eleven and their own preparation for the issue in which so much was at stake. Kingsland could hear them twisting and turning in the beds to right and left of his room. He sighed and wished he might be in the same uneasy plight, until he grew drowsier and drowsier and drifted out of his unhappy mood.

He was dreaming of a foot-ball scrimmage in which a band of Princeton rushers, ten feet tall, was pursuing him down the field, when a knock at the door half-aroused him and he heard Mike Morrison mutter, fretfully:

"Telegram for you. I suppose it is nothing more

## A PROBLEM OF DUTY

than good wishes for to-morrow. I know you men are still awake or I'd have held it till morning."

Still in a fog of sleep, Kingsland slid from his bed, groped in the darkness until he laid hands on the telegram which had been shoved under the door, and lighted a lamp, idly wondering who could be silly enough to waste such a message on him. Without looking at the address on the face of the envelope, he tore it open, while he blinked and yawned prodigiously, and read these startling words:

TELESCOPE MAGNITUDE SOPORIFIC INDEFENSIBLE.

ROBERT YATES.

Kingsland instantly became wide awake and stared at the slip of paper with a ludicrous air of bewilderment. He discovered that the message was addressed, not to him, but to Joshua Yates, and it dawned upon him that Mike Morrison, unaware of the belated exchange of bedrooms, had quite reasonably made the blunder of sliding it under the door of the room which had been assigned to Yates. Having fathomed this much, Kingsland eyed the telegram with acute disfavor and suspicion and muttered aloud, as was his habit when intensely interested:

"Now, if this isn't a tactless thing to send a football player the night before a big game. It was cabled from the other side, um-m—from London—

## THE HEAD COACH

and it is in code, I suppose. And it must be from Josh's father or brother. But I don't like the looks of those mysterious words. They may be chuck full of bad news. '*Telescope magnitude*' sounds like a railroad wreck to me. If it was simply a good-luck message there would be no need of code words. A man would naturally cable: '*Best wishes. Buck up,*' or something of the sort, in plain, honest English, instead of shooting language at a fellow that is enough to scare him to death on sight."

Kingsland plumped into a chair, held his head between his hands, and pondered in his own methodical fashion. He recalled that Josh Yates had said something about his family being abroad for the winter. The longer he meditated the more reluctant he was to deliver the message to the centre rush. He felt certain that Yates was not of tough enough fibre to stand up under news of disaster and be fit to play foot-ball for his life a few hours later. He would break down, perhaps weep, for his nerves were already perilously near the edge of giving way.

"You could knock him over with a feather to-night," Kingsland said to himself. "This confounded cablegram may be perfectly harmless, but how can I tell? On the other hand, it may be a regular bomb-shell, and it rests with me whether the fuse is touched off to-night or not. It could not

## A PROBLEM OF DUTY

do any great harm to hold it until after the game, only a few hours. The college has some rights in the matter."

So thoroughly sound at heart was Kingsland that he was not swayed by his own interests. Loyalty had been drilled into him until it was a kind of instinct. Before long, however, he realized that his own foot-ball career might be staked on this cabled message. If he decided to carry it into the next room, and it really contained bad news, then it would be a weapon to complete the demoralization of Josh Yates. And if Yates weakened and seemed unfit to be sent into the game, then the way would be clear for George Kingsland to play centre rush against Princeton.

Perspiration beaded the "Deacon's" honest brow as he looked squarely at the temptation. What would the coaches decide to do, were they in his place? These men were older and wiser than he, but they were no less absorbed in the welfare of the eleven, and they were likely to view it as a matter of course that Yates should be guarded against needless shock. Then Kingsland fell to thinking of his long, losing fight to win a place on the team. He deserved to have it, while Yates was an undetected counterfeit. Kingsland crumpled the telegram in his fist and walked the floor. It thrilled every drop of his red blood to picture himself trotting across the



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field with the eleven and facing embattled Princeton for the opening kick-off. As for Josh Yates, he would be glad to find an excuse for staying out of the glorious struggle in which Kingsland was ready to break anything short of his neck.

But the coaches had chosen Yates. They stood for authority, discipline, final and absolute. It was not for a private in the ranks to question their wisdom or thwart their desire. Intolerant elders sometimes scorn the ardent interests of the campus as petty and immature compared with the larger problems of the later years, yet never in his life would George Kingsland have a more insidious temptation to grapple with nor a more difficult moral decision to make than this which was no more than an incident of a foot-ball training season.

At length he slipped into his clothes and said aloud as he stole into the hall toward the stairs:

"It might mean great things for me if I gave this message to Yates and it bowled him over, but the decision is no business of mine."

As he descended he heard a subdued murmur of voices in the parlor of the inn where the coaches were still threshing over the plan of campaign to the last detail. Kingsland hesitated, advanced with an air of determination, and faced the little group of men who glanced up in surprise as if to ask why he was prowling about at this unseemly hour. He fore-

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stalled their questions by addressing the senior coach of them all:

"Mr. Kemp, here is a cablegram that Mike Morrison left in my room by mistake. I opened it, thinking it was for me. It is for Josh Yates, and I am afraid it may contain bad news from his folks in England. I thought you ought to know about it first. Yates is fretting a good deal as it is, and he couldn't stand much more."

Mr. Wallace Kemp gravely read the message, passed it on to his companions, and gazed at "Deacon" Kingsland with keen, sympathetic understanding.

"Perhaps I am more familiar with using a code-book than you are," said he. "The meaning of these particular words, of course, conveys nothing at all, even though '*telescope magnitude*' has a hair-raising sound, and I don't blame you in the least for shying at it. But if the message really carries bad news it might shock Yates. Yes, I understand. Did you think of giving it to him without consulting us?"

"Yes, I stewed over it for some time," was the frank answer. "You see, sir, I didn't know but what it might give me—" He flushed, bit his lip, and said no more, unwilling as he was to parade his victory over temptation. "Oh, it was the only decent thing to do, so I came down-stairs."

"You mean that you might have played at centre

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to-morrow?" continued Wallace Kemp. "You think that Yates hasn't sand enough to take punishment in the shape of bad news?"

"I did not say that," rejoined Kingsland, with some temper. "I have nothing to say about his sand. If you don't mind, I am going back to bed."

"Hold on, 'Deacon,' not so fast," exclaimed one of the younger coaches. "Don't you want to know what we are going to do with the message? Perhaps we shall decide to give it to Yates to-night."

"I took it for granted that you would hold it back until after the game," was the reply.

"I don't know about that," put in Wallace Kemp. "At first I was inclined to withhold it, but it has just occurred to me that if there is a hurry-call for Yates in this message, he will have time to catch a fast steamer sailing from New York to-morrow, Saturday morning. This is the one factor in the case that makes me think it would not be right to take the risk of interfering with what may be something serious. We are all guessing in the dark, however, and I shall now proceed to interview young Mr. Yates."

"Then I refuse to go to bed until after the bomb is exploded," said Kingsland.

"Shake hands, 'Deacon,'" exclaimed Mr. Kemp. "Even if this cable message turns out to be a false alarm, you have behaved most handsomely. We all

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knew you were a brick, but now you have to hear it to your face."

"Pshaw! I couldn't do anything else," murmured Kingsland, who was more confused than if he had been awaiting the Princeton attack. His heart was beating faster than usual as he lingered in the hall just outside the door of Yates's room and heard him sputter sleepily, as Wallace Kemp shook him by the shoulder:

"Second down and five yards to gain. What's the signal?"

"Sorry to disturb you," said Mr. Kemp, "but the ball isn't in play, and as for the signals, you will have to furnish your own code. Here is a cablegram. If we could have made head or tail of it we might have let you slumber in peace."

"It's from dad," observed the sleepy young giant, with no trace of excitement. "The code-book is in my bag. Do you mind fetching it? Thanks."

There was silence while Kingsland moved nearer and peered over Mr. Kemp's shoulder, tensely curious and expectant. After considerable study Yates announced in weary tones:

"That fool country operator didn't have sense enough to hold this till morning. Father is sailing for home to-morrow on a flying business trip, and wants me to be sure to get him a seat for the Harvard game. At least that is what I make out of the

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code word that translates itself, '*be sure to make reservation for next Saturday.*' He also wishes me good fortune for to-morrow."

"Well, of all the tempests in a teapot!" ejaculated Kingsland in great disgust.

Yates heaved himself out of bed and fairly shouted:

"Why, hello, 'Deacon.' That reminds me. Just before I went to sleep I heard you talking to yourself in the next room. It was about this very message. By Jove, my wits are coming back."

"Oh, please forget it for to-night, won't you? It was all a mistake," Kingsland pleaded so earnestly that the other subsided, while the coach exhorted:

"For Heaven's sake, you will wake the whole team with that bull-of-Bashan voice of yours, Yates. No more talk to-night. Go to sleep again."

The long night passed and the morning hours somehow dragged by until the eleven was actually in its familiar quarters at the field and dressed and armored for the contest. Josh Yates, for one, was somewhat pale of countenance, and wobbly as to the knees when he strode across the turf with his devoted comrades and faced the roaring tumult of thirty thousand Yale and Princeton partisans, who were behaving themselves like so many ramping, raving lunatics. And there was the enemy, a hungry, brutal-looking band of Tigers eager for

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manslaughter, or so they appeared to Yates, who was convinced that they were particularly eager to make a square meal of the Yale centre rush.

No sooner, however, had the rush lines clashed in the first onset than Josh Yates awoke and converted himself into a veritable battering-ram, to the surprise of his friends and the acute discomfiture of his foes. As the contest raged up and down the field, the Yale coaches grinned and pounded each other in sheer delight whenever the towering figure of the centre rush loomed from the scrimmage, a terror of a man who blocked his opponent or broke through at will, and displayed a fierce, unflagging aggressiveness as if he cared neither for life nor limb.

"Deacon" Kingsland trotted up and down the side lines with the other blanketed substitutes, amazed to perceive that Yates gave no indication whatever of being "played off his feet" or of showing that "yellow streak" which had been foreshadowed in his behavior during the practice season. He was like a man who had suddenly found himself, and his great strength and weight were fired and quickened by the fighting spirit which made him singularly formidable. Kingsland wondered if he had been unfair and unjust to this rival of his, and felt generous repentance for his attitude of suspicion. Perhaps Yates had stood in need of the stimulus of a "big game" to waken him.

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When the team left the field for the intermission between the halves, Kingsland hurried to overtake Josh Yates, who was limping toward the dressing-room, scowling and battered, and shook his grimy hand as he exclaimed:

"Great work, old man! You will forgive me for all the nasty things I said, won't you? The coaches knew their business when they sent you into the game. Keep it up and you will smash their line to pieces next half with straight, old-fashioned foot-ball right down the field."

Yates turned to look at Kingsland with a slow smile, hesitated, and said with awkward sincerity:

"I have nothing against you, 'Deacon.' I told you I meant to do my best to-day. I shall want to see you after the game. I have been waiting to tell you something."

The coaches herded the team behind locked doors and scolded and exhorted them in accordance with approved tradition, which ordeal Josh Yates endured with an air of grim resolution, as if he knew in his own mind what was expected of him and had no idea of flinching from the remainder of the great test. There was no talk of putting in a substitute centre rush, and Kingsland had given up all hope of winning his "Y" against Princeton, yet oddly enough he almost forgot his own disappointment in his genuine gratification at the unexpected valor

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of Josh Yates, who had also forgotten himself and was "playing for the college."

Neither team had scored during the first half, and it was, indeed, "straight, old-fashioned foot-ball" that finally won the game for Yale by the narrow margin of one touch-down. Compact masses were hurled at the centre of the Princeton line or launched against her sorely buffeted tackles, and, playing hard and fast and courageously until the last scrimmage of the afternoon, Josh Yates acquitted himself as one worthy of the colors he wore. The cheering was done, the huge arena empty, and the victors were ready to ride to the campus and the training table with appetites gigantic and emotions beyond the power of speech, when Yates beckoned George Kingsland away from the other players and told him:

"I want to say a few things to you. Will you walk as far as the gate? The 'bus will pick us up in a few minutes."

It was evidently difficult for Yates to make known what was on his mind, for his manner was almost pitiably embarrassed, and his face grew redder and redder as he slouched along, gazing at the turf in front of him. Kingsland was at a loss to understand this curiously abashed mood, and waited until Yates began to speak in a voice vibrant with feeling:



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"I owe you a confession, 'Deacon.' It seems pretty hard to make it, but this day will be spoiled for me if I do not put myself on a square basis with you. I had not gone to sleep when you received that cable message last night. You have a trick of talking to yourself, you know, and I heard you walking the floor trying to decide what to do with it. By putting two and two together, I got a pretty straight glimpse of what your thoughts must be. You reasoned that if there was some kind of disastrous tidings you had a chance of putting me out of the game and of going in yourself. You thought I was a quitter. But you decided against yourself, and I heard you go down-stairs to give the message to Wallace Kemp. It was awfully white of you, 'Deacon.' It did me no end of good. It made me determined to play the kind of game you would have put up in my place. Can you understand how the incident affected me?"

"I did nothing worth mentioning," said Kingsland. "As matters turned out, all my fussing with my conscience didn't amount to shucks. It turned out to be a sorry kind of a joke on me. I felt silly."

"Well, it was no joke to me," and Yates spoke with heavy emphasis. "It makes no difference, not a bit of it, that the cablegram was a false alarm. You did not know that when you made your decision. You were fighting out that problem, and it was a

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mighty real one to you, and I was lucky enough to catch the drift of it. You didn't intend that I should know anything about it. You were thinking of the college and of your duty, and letting yourself go hang. There was no grandstand play about it. How do you suppose I felt? Well, it hit me right between the eyes. If I was to play the position I had taken away from you, it was up to me to play it like a man. There is something more to tell you if you do not yet understand."

Yates halted and turned to face Kingsland. He was nervously fingering the buttons of his coat, and his lip twitched as he forced himself to continue:

"I had completely lost my nerve. I didn't want to play in the Princeton game. You can't imagine what it means to drop your sand. I knew that you could put up the pluckier game, and I was afraid of myself, afraid that I might weaken and be branded as a quitter before the college, before all those thousands of people. It was eating my heart out. I was all on edge, almost crazy, just brooding over it day and night. Why, I would have been glad of any excuse to be taken off the team."

"Was it as bad as that, Josh? But why hold post-mortems? You covered yourself with glory, and you will do just as well or better against Harvard next week. It was not real cowardice or you could not have played as you did to-day. You are

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giving me a lot of credit that I do not in the least deserve. So forget that part of it."

"You made me ashamed of myself, and I fought to win my self-respect as well as the foot-ball game," was Yates's rejoinder, which summed up the whole matter in compact form.

Kingsland's honest eyes mirrored friendly sympathy and respect, and his grip was strong and true as he shook hands with the centre rush and said:

"If I really had anything to do with it, then I have made good, too, and I helped the team to win. Whew, but I am certainly glad that I did not trot in to your room and hand you that cablegram, Josh."

### CHAPTER III

## THE GAME OF LIFE

THE Harvard game, which followed a week later, resulted in another victory for the team of the New Haven university. This, however, is not a Yale story, and it would be superfluous to describe in detail the ebb and flow of that Homeric contest in which many great and shining deeds were done by both elevens. It is more important to relate that Josh Yates was carried from the field with a badly sprained ankle soon after the game began, and that "Deacon" Kingsland took his place at centre rush, playing a shrewd and valiant part in every scrimmage, and thereby winning his dearly coveted "Y." The college was delighted to behold this proof of the proverb, "Everything comes to him who waits," and cheered Kingsland with whatever breath could be spared from uproariously encouraging the team.

After supper that night, this hero of ours went to Josh Yates's room and found that crippled gladiator stretched out on a divan, one leg in a plaster cast. He was in cheerful spirits, however, and cried out lustily:

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"'Tis an ill wind that blows nobody good. I am not a bit sorry it happened, 'Deacon.' I hear you put up a whirlwind game and made the Harvard centre think you weighed a ton. Well, you are hereby elected to hold down the position next year. I am on the retired list. No more foot-ball for Joshua, thank you kindly."

"What do you mean? Your ankle will mend all right. Of course you will play in Senior year and wind up your college course in a blaze of glory," Kingsland protested. "What is the matter now?"

"Oh, I haven't dropped my sand again," replied Yates, with a candid smile. "But I have done my confounded duty to the college, and, for one thing, I don't like the game. The main fact, however, is that I have been getting awfully poor marks in recitations through the fall, and my examination papers are going to be rather bad. It will be sheer luck if I pull through. I am a flighty student at best, and I can't play foot-ball and tackle my books low and hard at the same time. It is a disgraceful confession, but I am not as strong in the head as I am in the back."

"Nonsense; you are lazy, and you like to sport around with your bull-terriers, and you waste no end of time," was the severe retort. "I believe you are chucking up foot-ball to give me a place on the team next year."

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"How unkind of you—and with me helpless and unable to take a fall out of you," chuckled Yates. "My mind is made up—it isn't much of a mind at that, but not even you can budge it."

Kingsland smothered his impatience with this provoking athlete and departed after begging him to reconsider his ultimatum. A few days later, however, the word had spread over the campus that Josh Yates had decided to seek no more foot-ball laurels and was therefore out of the running for the next year's captaincy. Most of the veterans of the team were to be graduated in the following June, and the problem of choosing a leader was therefore made uncommonly difficult. The members of the team wisely solved this problem by electing George Kingsland, to his bewildered amazement. Campus sentiment approved the choice, not because of his record as a 'varsity player, but because of his tremendously useful but by no means showy services as leader of the "scrub," or second eleven, through three hard-working seasons.

In other words, he had done with his might what his hand found to do, and the college was content to see him rewarded for it. He was used to making an uphill fight, and could not be dismayed when the odds were against him, wherefore he was the very man for the place, because he must build up what amounted to a new team from green material.

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His prolonged and bruising career had made him the most seasoned veteran of the lot, and he had the confidence of every man who expected to try for a place on the next Yale eleven.

The year slid past through the busy programme of campus activities, and the early autumn of Kingsland's Senior year found him on the field with his squad of recruits. It proved to be a strenuous season. clouded by many discouragements, while the captain hammered away at his task of making his green-horns ready to face the confident and wily veterans of Princeton and Harvard. The coaches were gloomy with forebodings, and the undergraduate world was a prey to doubt. The team was not expected to win, but Kingsland kept his misgivings to himself and maintained a cheerful countenance. Little by little he fired his men with the flaming ardor of his own invincible purpose, taught them how to fight in the last ditch, and declared that there was no such word as defeat in his lexicon.

The unexpected happened. This forlorn hope of an eleven was tried and not found wanting. After the final game, when the championship was won, the frenzied thousands of spectators threw dignity, hats, and umbrellas to the winds, while they shouted their plaudits and called it "the Yale spirit," being exceedingly biased in favor of alma mater. The weary players who dragged themselves

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from the muddy arena were wiser than their elders. They knew that it was the spirit of George Kingsland which had held defeat at bay.

The triumphant success of the team was so unlooked for that the captain became the centre of hero-worship gone mad. And when the college had finished telling him what a great man he was, the enthusiastic alumni organized a banquet in New York at which grave and reverend judges, doctors, and captains of industry made speeches about him, and flourished little blue flags, and sang "Boola" until they were red in the face and short-winded. Solemn writers of newspaper editorials wagged their gray beards and grumbled that no college valedictorian was ever honored in this wise, that all this uproar over college athletes was criminal nonsense, and that higher education was going to the demnition bow-wows generally. Their ominous predictions that the hero must be spoiled by such pernicious laudation were wide of the mark, for "Deacon" Kingsland wore his laurels with a humorous twinkle of his keen blue eyes and pithily termed the celebrants "a bunch of cheerful idiots."

He had no more loyal admirer than Josh Yates, who was pursuing his easy-going way, spending his wealth with lavish hand, wearing clothes whose patterns cried aloud, and cultivating his fairly harmless ambition to be thought "a good sport." The jovial,



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ruddy, swaggering six-footer outwardly mourned the fact that "low stand" had barred him from foot-ball in his Senior year, but Kingsland knew that he was glad to be freed from the shackles of training and chaffed him in private.

Shortly after Kingsland's elevation to his pedestal as the college hero, it befell, of a Sunday evening, that he was crossing the campus when Josh Yates hailed him with joyous invitation:

"Oh, 'Deacon,' come on down-town with me. Pat McCarty, the oyster-house man, has a bull-terrier pup he wants to sell me. It is a grandson of Sovereign Brindle, and a corker."

"Can't do it, Josh. I am on my way to Dwight Hall. I promised to give the fellows a little talk at the prayer-meeting to-night," replied Kingsland, with a matter of fact air.

"By Jove, I forgot you were a Dwight Hall heeler, 'Deacon.' A thousand pardons for obtruding the terrier pup. But I didn't know you ever handed out speeches in meeting. Oratory is not your long suit, barring such eloquent outbursts as 'tear 'em up, fellows,' and 'where's your sand, you white-livered apologies for foot-ball players.'"

Kingsland jammed his hands in his pockets, kicked at the gravel, and appeared more flustered than Yates ever remembered to have seen him in the thick of a desperate game as he stammered:

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"I *am* pretty rotten when I get on my feet and try to talk to a crowd, Josh; but—but—well, you see, I am a kind of college leader now, and—and—I believe in practical religion—and I am not ashamed of it. It is my duty to take part in the Dwight Hall meetings if the fellows want me to. I *am* pretty well rattled, so please don't guy me. Won't you come along?"

"Blessed if I don't," cried Yates, with much gusto. "The terrier pup can wait. I have not been in Dwight Hall since Freshman year. Behold, you have sown the good seed already. They had better not ask me to talk, 'Deacon.' I might expose you. When I used to smite you on one cheek you never turned the other. Not a bit of it. You just hauled off and swatted me, and smeared my nose all over my face."

Kingsland smiled, but had little more to say. His companion eyed him quizzically, and after noting his nervousness, blithely remarked:

"Now you know how *I* used to feel just before a foot-ball game. You thought I was sandless, but here you are all in a stew at the notion of passing a few remarks to a crowd of your friends in Dwight Hall."

"Oh, shut up," muttered the other as they mounted the stone steps of the massive building wherein was centred the religious life of the university. The as-

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sembly hall was filled with undergraduates who overcame a natural impulse to cheer at sight of Kingsland, their idol. He surveyed them with a frank smile of greeting and seated himself near the platform, braced for the ordeal which had appealed to him as being in the line of duty.

Now, it is a mistake to assume that the life of any college community is all books, athletics, and social diversion. If the atmosphere of the campus is wholesome and vigorous, there will run a strong current of organized religious activity created by the influences brought from good American homes and from contact with the daily lives of the kind of fathers and mothers that are still the bulwark of this nation. In the Dwight Hall of George Kingsland's time there was in evidence a sturdy, boyish faith, without creed or dogma, which found its expression in the desire to be of service to humanity, to take life with more seriousness, perhaps, than might have been expected of the happy-go-lucky undergraduate of the most prevalent type.

In such gatherings as this Sunday-night meeting, a young man respected as an all-around leader of campus opinion was not ashamed to stand on his feet and tell his fellows in a simple, unaffected way that he wanted to do right and that clean living and clean thinking were what should be expected of a college man. Kingsland was not afraid of taking

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such a stand. It was the tongue-tied awkwardness which beset him at such times that made his stout heart quail. More than this, he had an announcement to make which would come as a surprise to his audience, and it was with considerable trepidation that he stepped upon the platform, toward the close of the meeting, and began to speak with hesitant diffidence:

"I think it is a mighty fine thing to see three or four hundred of you fellows here to-night because you believe it is the right thing to do. You didn't turn out to hear me speak, I know, for I am no good at this proposition. But there is no doubt that we all want to be something more than strong men, successful men. We want to be good men. From my own experience, I can say that a man doesn't have to be a mollycoddle to be a religious man. My class will be leaving college in a few months, and most of us are planning what kind of work we are going to take up. I have been thinking pretty hard, and I have decided to be a minister. It is not a very popular profession among college men in these days, and the divinity schools get hold of some pretty weak specimens. That is to say—I mean—they are all right, of course, but a lot of them don't measure very big around the chest and need a few months' hard training to put them in any kind of condition. And a fellow who is used to fighting to

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get what he wants, and has been through the foot-ball mill—well, he has had a pretty good preparation for bucking the centre in trying to make the world better because he had lived in it. I'll never make much of a preacher, I know that, and you fellows needn't grin and nudge each other, but there are other ways of getting hold of people and lending them a hand. It is awfully good of you to want me to say something to-night, but I can't think of anything more just now."

With this Kingsland marched to his seat, blushing rosily and breathing as hard as if he had dashed half the length of the field for a touch-down. There was a stir and a murmur of surprised whispers, and the meeting came to an end after the singing of a hymn with immense vigor, a lusty volume of melody that rolled across the campus like a battle anthem.

A few minutes later Kingsland, having detached himself from a group of congenial friends, was sauntering toward his rooms, when he was overtaken by a slender, spectacled youth of rather priggish appearance, who extended his hand and cried warmly:

"It was splendid tidings that you brought us to-night, brother. Do you expect to enter the Yale Divinity School in the fall? If so, we shall be classmates and co-workers in the vineyard of the Lord."

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Kingsland regarded the speaker with as much friendliness as he could muster, and replied, without enthusiasm:

"Yes, I intend to stay in New Haven three years more, Whittaker. We shall be fellow-theologues, all right."

"So you have had a call," pursued Jared Whittaker, with a kind of headlong eagerness as he fell into step with the unresponsive athlete. "I never quite approved of foot-ball, you know. And while I have seldom attended the practice or the contests, I am under the impression that you yourself played a rough and even brutal game, not wholly in harmony with the gospel of meekness and long-suffering that you must some day preach. It is a cause for profound thanksgiving that you have experienced a change of heart. Was your conversion to God a sudden matter?"

Kingsland halted in his tracks, frowned as if annoyed, and tried to banish the temper from his voice as he replied.

"Whittaker, you make me tired. I never played dirty foot-ball in my life, and if you had kept at all in touch with your class and the college you would not say such things. I have not been converted, as you call it. I am going to try to do my duty in my life's work, just as I played foot-ball because it was my duty. Confound it all, you seem to size me up

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as a brand plucked from the burning! I don't expect to forget my foot-ball in the Divinity School. If the team needs me to help coach, I shall be on the field in my spare time, you bet."

Kingsland's accents had waxed aggressive, and Jared Whittaker retreated with symptoms of dismay, as if he half expected to be stood upon his head. The athlete climbed the stairway to his rooms, wearing a somewhat chastened air of regret that he should have scolded a well-meaning classmate, and found Josh Yates sprawled upon a window-seat. That cheerful young man glanced up to remark:

"You look as if you had contracted a grouch, 'Deacon.' Was it that solemn ass, Whittaker? I saw that he was about to collar you, and I fled like a deer for cover. Did he spring an address of welcome to the ministerial fold?"

After gazing absently at the walls, whistling softly as if to let off steam, and upsetting the waste-basket with a well-aimed place-kick, the prospective theological student grumbled peevishly:

"The college means nothing to Whittaker but a place for digging a lot of useless rubbish out of books, and I'll bet he doesn't know half the men in his class by sight. He is all cant and prejudice and dyspepsia and spectacles. His motives are all right, and I presume that he will be able to preach rings all round me but I wish to goodness I could

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nave had him out with the scrub eleven for a season or two. It would have done him a whole lot of good."

"Ten to one his fragments would have strewn the field," said Yates, who was highly diverted by this outburst. "Of course I have the sporting viewpoint, but it strikes me that the Theologues are a pretty weedy lot and you will find most of them slow company, I fear. What in the world put you up to this decision? Have you talked it over with your friends? What does your family say about it?"

"I have four generations of clergymen back of me, Josh. My folks approve, of course. No, I have said little about it to the fellows. It is not easy to make them understand. But I can't be talked out of it, so there is no sense in threshing it over now."

"I am not fool enough to try to move a stone wall," returned Yates with a laugh. "But see here, 'Deacon,' it has done me more good than anything else in college just to play foot-ball with you. And I counted on getting square. I have a good deal of property and various business interests, don't you know, and I can give you a famous start if you will tie up with me after graduation. Your kind of man will be worth a great deal to me. And you can have all the chance in the world to do good, with a



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few hundred employees to manage after you get the hang of things. The whole class thinks you are the man most likely to succeed at whatever career you choose to tackle."

Kingsland thrust his stubborn jaw a little forward, and his shoulders were very square as he answered earnestly:

"Thank you, Josh. Glad to know I have made good with you. But you talk as the rest of the crowd feels. You think I am wasting myself, throwing away a career, by going into the Church. I tell you, there never was a time when good men were more needed in pulpit and parish. There are too many Jared Whittakers, men with milk-and-water in their veins instead of red blood. You men seem to think it a funny anti-climax for me to take this step right on top of all the hip-hip-hooray over my foot-ball captaincy. But I shall be a better minister for being a first-class foot-ball captain—just put that in your pipe and smoke it."

"Oh, for Heaven's sake, don't suppose that I think any the less of you," hastily sputtered the other. "I admire you tremendously for lining up as you have. You are a regular up-to-date Crusader, barring the tin armor and other fixings. No joking. I mean it. A few hundred years ago, you would have been clattering off to lead mass-plays against the infidel dogs, and furnishing some more pages of

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mediæval history for poor undergraduates to worry over. Go in and win, 'Deacon,' and if you are shy a parish when you emerge from the Divinity School, just telegraph me and I will build you a church to order and see that you have a congregation—or they lose their jobs, every mother's son of them."

Having delivered himself of this generous declaration, Josh Yates concluded that it was not yet too late to seek Pat McCarty and the peerless bull-terrier, wherefore he departed suddenly and in great haste. Kingsland had no room-mate in his Senior year, and, deprived of the comfort of this intimate kind of companionship, he did not search for confidants. He had never talked much of his own affairs and had that solid pattern of character which needs not to trumpet its own merits. The campus and his friends thereon were very dear to him, and he rather flinched from the thought of moving to the Divinity School on the other side of Elm Street and becoming a spectator of the activities in which he had played so large a part. Jared Whittaker had fairly set his teeth on edge. With the thorough-going intolerance of youth, he could find little good in a man who was not willing to "work for the college" in one way or another.

A few days later, Kingsland happened to meet the athletic trainer, Mike Morrison, whose rugged countenance mirrored surprise and sympathy as

## THE HEAD COACH

he observed in subdued tones, as if he were a chief mourner:

"The tip is out that you are going to sign with the Theologues, 'Deacon.' Take my word for it, the Divinity School has seldom turned out a man that could make even a scrub eleven or run a hundred yards in fourteen seconds. They are a lot of dead ones over there. Good men; oh yes! I'm saying nothing against them, mind you; but, on the level, is it too late for you to cancel your contract? I can get you a position to coach next fall at 'most any figure you name. How does two thousand dollars and expenses for three months' easy work strike you? Doesn't that make you hesitate? They can never hold you down to a pulpit unless they put hobbles on you. You have too much sand and ginger, 'Deacon.' You could tackle the devil low, all right, and put him down to stay, but you would be too strong for your parishioners. Is it straight news?"

"Sure thing, Mike," and Kingsland laughed at the distressful demeanor of the veteran trainer. "Your gold can never buy me. And if you don't watch out, I may be getting after you as a stray sheep, you old reprobate."

"The finest centre rush that ever wore a cleated shoe," sighed the other. "And you will never be appreciated as a clergyman. Over yonder in the Divinity School they will give more glory to the

## THE GAME OF LIFE

pale lad that gets a strangle hold on a Hebrew root than to the man that licked Harvard with the odds against him as big as a mountain. Your record won't do you a bit of good."

If Mike Morrison, single-minded in his devotion to athletics, was in a disappointed mood, Kingsland found many of his classmates outspoken in praise of his decision, and as the spring wore on he was troubled by no regrets. The college turned its lively attention to base-ball, rowing, and other seasonable sports, and the foot-ball fame of 'Deacon' Kingsland was gradually shoved into the background. His four years in Yale were near the end, four years of work and play, buttressed by substantial achievement which held promise of an honorable career, if not a brilliant one, in the grown-up world that seethed beyond the sheltering boundaries of the campus elms. Commencement Week came ere he was aware that the parting ceremonies could be so near, a week crowded with events immensely vital and dramatic to the actors; and on Class Day no one sang with more fervor than Kingsland the old, old song:

The saddest tale we have to tell,  
Fol-de-rol, de-rol-rol-rol,  
Is when we bid old Yale farewell,  
Fol-de-rol, de-rol-rol-rol.

## CHAPTER IV IN TRAINING

OF George Kingsland's three years in the Divinity School, many interesting stories might be written. He lost weight and came to look haggard in his dogged efforts to get what Mike Morrison had dubbed a "strangle hold" on Hebrew, but had to trail far in the rear of that indefatigable bookworm, Jared Whittaker. In fact, this cadaverous classmate, whom Kingsland had held in such light esteem, developed an intellectual prowess that commanded respect, whether or no; and, when it came to practice in pulpit oratory, Whittaker was a star of large dimensions. Poor Kingsland stumbled and faltered, and was driven to the dismal conclusion that, try as he might, he could not hope to shine at preaching the truths he was so very anxious to send home to the hearts of men.

He never thought of quitting—he was not that kind—and he dutifully studied and dreamed of future usefulness with unflagging zeal. Gradually his vision became widened, instead of narrowed, by his scholastic environment; and he learned to re-

## IN TRAINING

spect, even to admire, his fellow-students, most of them of slender means, who had chosen a path in which there could be small prospect of worldly enrichment. Jared Whittaker was more or less irritating, however, for Kingsland was too human to accept with a resigned spirit the fact that he failed to shine in comparison with the hollow-cheeked, ascetic student of the midnight oil whose apprentice sermons were so neatly phrased and readily spoken.

Whittaker was somewhat visionary, but he came to earth long enough to interest himself in a social club for men in that quarter of New Haven where poverty and drunkenness dwelt; and it was his custom to lead a weekly religious service for the benefit of this mission. It happened on one occasion that Kingsland was invited to attend, and, to the great confusion of Jared Whittaker, a stalwart longshoreman, much the worse for too much bad rum, wandered in and loudly declared his intention of taking command.

Jared argued with considerable agitation; but moral suasion was futile, and the intruder, waxing more violent, was for breaking the peacemaker in two, which would have been no hard task. Kingsland had looked on with rising wrath, and at the proper moment he arose and sailed into the longshoreman with feet and fists. Biff, bang, hammer

## THE HEAD COACH

and tongs, the battle raged from one end of the mission to the other, while the congregation poured out of doors and windows. Jared Whittaker hovered on the outskirts of the fray like a distracted hen, and at length bethought himself to dash frantically after a policeman or two. When he returned, "Deacon" Kingsland was sitting astride his prostrate foe, hammering him into submission with the leg of a demolished chair. The two were pried apart with much difficulty, and the conquered roustabout was led captive to a patrol wagon, sputtering, through his loosened teeth, the most generous admiration for the prowess of "the blankety-blank steam-engine of a preacher."

Kingsland walked homeward, one eye closed, a lump on his head, and a raw set of knuckles, while Jared Whittaker poured forth voluble thanks.

"You once scolded me for playing a hard game of foot-ball," said Kingsland. "If it hadn't been for a little muscular Christianity delivered right between the eyes, that big brute might have eaten you alive. Mind you, I know well enough that you are bound to fill a good deal bigger pulpit than I can even touch; but there is a place for me somewhere, and maybe I can make good in my fashion."

The other man flung out his arms in a gesture that smacked a little of the theatrical, and replied, as if deeply moved:



Jared Whittaker hovered on the outskirts of the fray  
like a distracted hen.



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## IN TRAINING

"I was wrong, George. I apologize with all my heart. But could you not have subdued that ruffian to-night with less—er—with less sanguinary results? Pounding him with a fragment of chair struck me as—well, almost brutal. I could not help surmising, to be perfectly frank, that the influences of your football career had gone too far."

Kingsland was hot with honest indignation as he retorted:

"See here, Jared, I know that kind of a scrapper, and you don't. He would have gouged my eye out with half a chance, or kicked me in the stomach. There are lots of things you don't understand, brilliant as you are. The world is full of all kinds of people, and you do not seem to know it. How are you going to handle the rough, brutal kind, as you are so fond of calling them? Not that you have to be handy with your fists or be in shape to fight your way, but you must show them that you are not afraid of them. You must meet the world as man to man. That is my doctrine."

Jared walked in silence for some time, as if not quite sure how to answer this argument, and at length chose to veer off on another tack.

"Do you remember the committee from the church at Spindle Falls, Maine, that came here last month to find a supply for next summer? They wanted a student who might be given a permanent

## THE HEAD COACH

call if he pleased the parish. They heard me preach that Sunday in the chapel at Fairhaven. I received a letter to-day offering me the pulpit on the basis of a six months' trial. I shall accept, George. Spindle Falls is a thriving manufacturing city, and the church is the strongest in the place."

Kingsland winced as if he were hurt deeper than his bruises, and his straightforward nature moved him to reply, with disappointment in his voice:

"They heard me preach, too, Jared, and talked to me before they made this proposition to you. I was hoping to get the call. Nothing else has been offered, and here it is only two months to graduation. So you are the fortunate man. Well, I wish you luck. I am afraid it is not going to be easy for me to find a connection."

He did not confess how high he had been building his hopes or how taken aback he was by this news. His personality and the cordial indorsement of the faculty had impressed the committee from Spindle Falls, he was sure of it; but in the pulpit he had not come up to their expectations, and they had preferred the resounding eloquence of Jared Whittaker. George Kingsland sighed and pensively rubbed his swelling cheek; not that he bore any grudge, for he had been drilled to face defeat with manly, high-hearted temper; but to have Jared lay him by the heels in the open field was too much for his philosophy.

## IN TRAINING

The successful candidate perceived that he had made his companion unhappy, and, with a manner in which there was a shade of patronage, he went on to say:

"The committee mentioned a small parish, Mason Corners, about thirty miles from Spindle Falls, which needs a pastor. They have asked me to recommend a man. It is a struggling little organization in a farming village, a backwoods community, I fancy. It is not likely to interest you, I suppose; but a fellow has got to get started somewhere, you know."

Kingsland pricked up his ears and the expression of his battered lineaments was distinctly pugnacious. He did not wholly like this speech. It sounded too much as if he were already regarded as a ministerial incompetent who must be content to take the crumbs that fell from the table of Jared Whittaker. More than this, Kingsland instinctively sided with the under dog, and this "struggling backwoods parish" appealed to his chivalrous fighting spirit. If he could help those people, the place was worthy of a man's best endeavor. To the surprise of Jared, he promptly made reply:

"Exactly what I am looking for. Will they give a man enough salary to keep body and soul together?"

"Four hundred a year, if you can collect it, and part of that in firewood, vegetables, and donation parties," said Jared very solemnly.

## THE HEAD COACH

"All right, you may send word to your committee in Spindle Falls that you have found the man for the church in the hamlet, if the church wants him."

"They will be delighted, George," warmly rejoined Jared. "The committee will recommend you most earnestly to the brethren of Mason Corners, I am sure. You impressed the committee very favorably, and were considered the second choice for their own church; but——"

"Don't be afraid to tell the truth, Jared. They balked at my sermons and delivery. Well, the people of Mason Corners can't expect the eloquence of a Spurgeon or a Jared Whittaker for four hundred a year in cash, cabbages, cord-wood, and carpet slippers. If you will put me in communication with my future parishioners, you may consider yourself heartily thanked."

Whittaker shook his head with the air of a disapproving owl. Such headlong haste was unseemly. Kingsland might better himself by waiting a little longer. But the temperament of the former football captain knew not the quality of indecision, and his mind was made up. After offering some rather top-lofty advice, Whittaker promised to write to the elders of Spindle Falls, and Kingsland limped to his room in a glow of satisfaction. He used a great deal of arnica while making ready for bed, and surveyed his damaged features with the reflection that

## IN TRAINING

no parish would want him until he had been cured of that gorgeous black eye. However, he had fought and whipped a hulking longshoreman a good deal bigger than himself, and had the promise of a parish of his own in which there promised to be uphill fighting from the start. Wherefore life seemed very good, and he said his prayers and crawled painfully into bed with the honest conviction that he had much to be thankful for.

Shortly after this, Kingsland received and accepted a formal call to Mason Corners, on the heels of which event he read, with mingled emotion, the following letter from his classmate of other days, Josh Yates:

DEAR "DEACON":

You will be in commission as a full-fledged parson before long, if I have kept my dates straight. I expect to see you at our triennial in June, but this is an advance notice to make sure that you do nothing rash without consulting yours truly. I have not forgotten my promise to find a church and congregation for you. Seriously, old man, I want you out here in Colorado with me. I own most of my town, and it needs another church and a man like you. What do you say? Make it any denomination you like so long as you give the people "Deacon" Kingsland's unadulterated brand of faith and works. Shall I order my architect to prepare a set of plans and send them on to you for suggestions? Will a couple of thousand a year salary do to start on? Of course, when you find the girl you want to marry, it won't keep me awake nights to see that your income is doubled. I was never more in earnest

## THE HEAD COACH

in my life. Think it over and give me a fair show to get you, won't you? I am trotting a very steady gait these days—quite the solid man of business—and am not as devoted to fancy waistcoats and bull-terriers as in the brave days of yore. Plan to spend part of your summer vacation with me, whatever you do, and think of me as always faithfully yours.”

Kingsland scowled at this letter as if it had power to disturb him, yet there was genuine pleasure in the knowledge that big, noisy, impulsive Josh Yates was anxious to do so much for him. He had been one of Kingsland's converts, if you choose to call him such.

Grateful and loyal to a quixotic degree was Josh Yates—his letter proved it—but Kingsland stubbornly shook his head and held the temptation at arm's-length. He did not want to be a rich man's pastor of a one-man church, and, moreover, he had pledged his word to stand by the humble parish in a remote corner of New England which had taken him on faith, as one duly recommended by the worshipful elders of the metropolis of Spindle Falls. To break his word would be like selling himself to the highest bidder; it smacked of what he had hated as the “professional spirit” in his days as an athlete. Perhaps he had been hasty in promising to go to Mason Corners, but the transaction must stand; and Josh Yates could easily find a man to his liking in the hale and lusty West, if the need were real.

## IN TRAINING

"Josh never heard me try to preach," he said to himself, with a flicker of amusement. "One sermon might make him sick of his bargain. The Spindle Falls committee must have reported what a poor stick I am in the pulpit, and Mason Corners is willing to take a chance. I have had an intuition, ever since Jared Whittaker told me of the place, that it is where I ought to be. It is going to be hard sledding, but I never knew anything else; and I may be a fool, but I am not going to be a quitter. Josh Yates is a brick, but he spoke too late."



## CHAPTER V

### THE PARISH OF MASON CORNERS

BEFORE the end of the first year of his pastorate at Mason Corners, George Kingsland sometimes fell to wondering whether he had side-tracked himself for life. The village straggled along a brawling river amid the hills of Maine, a community of worn-out farms tilled in crude, old-fashioned ways by a population whose vitality had been drained by the exodus of its strong, energetic men to the cities and the beckoning West. To those who were left behind, the struggle for existence was an all-engrossing task. Their mental viewpoint was astonishingly narrow, and the dilapidated branch railroad which linked the town with the great highways of travel and the modern world seldom carried them beyond the county seat; although now and then a venturesome pilgrim fared as far as Spindle Falls, thirty miles away, and the boldest spirits, the Marco Polos of Mason Corners, went to Portland or Boston at least once a year. The four hundred dollars pledged to their minister was not such a pittance as Kingsland had considered it before he came to live among his

## THE PARISH OF MASON CORNERS

people. It was an income such as meant comfort to the well-to-do Mason Corners household, and many of them handled a less amount of cash in the year, nor counted themselves poor.

From time to time, Kingsland read in the Spindle Falls newspaper of the signal success of Jared Whittaker, who was hailed in florid phrase as a "brilliant pulpit orator with a large and fashionable congregation." These eulogies moved Kingsland to shake his head, smile to himself, and plod along on his humdrum way, with no trace of envy in his heart, although month after month went by and no invitation came from Jared to exchange pulpits for a Sunday. Whatever college ties had ever bound them together became more and more tenuous. Whittaker was reported to be tremendously busy, organizing clubs for young men, raising funds to build a parish house, and what not—the kind of work for which Kingsland had hoped to find opportunity, the field in which he felt that he could best succeed.

But, alas, few young men were left in Mason Corners, and it was hard to understand just what the Church meant to its toil-worn, flinty-faced patriarchs who drove to the square white box of a meeting-house, over villainous roads, as a matter of habit and tradition. They had been bred to listen to stern, old-fashioned doctrine; to be fed strong meat from Scripture which they believed to

## THE HEAD COACH

be literally true from cover to cover. Kingsland's straight-from-the-shoulder gospel of love and truth and gentleness and square dealing in every-day living, in field and shop and kitchen, was aside from the beaten path.

The grizzled elder who paraded the aisles on Sunday morning with the contribution box, and was up bright and early Monday to gouge his neighbor in a horse trade or sell a ton of hay by short weight, was made uncomfortable by Kingsland's emphatic insistence that faith without works and a creed without conscience were offences in the sight of God and man. Like the echo of far-off trumpets, sounding fainter and fainter, was the memory of the athletic triumphs which had once filled Kingsland's whole world. His parishioners could see no merit in a grown man's rejoicing in the years he had wasted at play; and the benefits of physical exercise for its own sake did not strongly appeal to farmers whose shoulders were bowed and hands calloused like horn by the hardest kind of bodily exertion from dawn till dark. So Kingsland tried to forget that he had been a foot-ball captain, and seldom made mention of a past of which he had been so very proud.

There were hours of black discouragement, but he was building better than he knew; and, although the surface indications were scanty, he was slowly

## THE PARISH OF MASON CORNERS

winning a respect and confidence such as were certain to make his forgotten little corner of the world brighter and better for his endeavors. Never in his mind was there any thought of retreat from his hard battle-ground. To break down the barriers of needless ignorance, to awaken the pride of good citizenship, to help make better farmers, to improve the schools and highways—these he believed to be just as important as his responsibilities as a religious leader; and he worked for the clean joy of working that is everywhere the strong man's satisfying reward. And less and less he regretted that he had been denied the gift of pulpit eloquence.

By the terms of his agreement with the parish, Kingsland was given two months' vacation in the year; and, as the second summer of his pastorate drew nigh, he began to look forward to visiting his parents and several of his old college friends. One day there came a letter from Mike Morrison, the Yale trainer, which caused these plans to be tossed aside. Kingsland read it with such a joyous light in his face as made him look like the valiant youth who had launched a fighting eleven against the Princeton rush line. The inspiring tidings were these:

MY DEAR "DEACON":

Here is hoping you are making good as a preacher and gaining five yards every down. The other day I got a letter from the manager of the athletic association of Jameson College,

## THE HEAD COACH

up in Spindle Falls, Maine. I never heard of the college before but it may be on the map for all that. He asked me to recommend a foot-ball coach for next fall. It seems they want a Yale man, and will pay him five hundred and expenses for a season of eight weeks. It came to me in a minute that you were somewhere up in that country, and of course I could not recommend a better man if I took a month to think it over. I don't know how you are fixed for spare time, but I hope you can take the job. Can't you put a substitute in your regular game of preaching for a couple of months, so as not to interfere? I offered to get you a much better coaching position, once on a time, and you turned me down flat. But this looks like a chance to pick up something on the side. I have written the Jameson College manager that if he can persuade you to sign a contract he will be luckier than the law allows. Run down to New Haven in the fall, if you can, and all hands will be delighted to show you the latest tricks of the game if you feel rusty on the up-to-date-formations.

The offer had a most attractive aspect. To postpone his vacation until autumn and spend most of the time at Jameson College seemed feasible enough, and, besides the real pleasure of hammering a foot-ball team into form, there was the five hundred dollars.

Thinking it unnecessary to obtain the permission of his church committee. Kingsland wrote to Mike Morrison to the effect that he would be willing to coach at Jameson College if the conditions were mutually satisfactory. Two weeks later he was visited by a delegation consisting of the Jameson

## THE PARISH OF MASON CORNERS

manager, the foot-ball captain, and a member of the faculty advisory board, who were for striking a bargain forthwith. Kingsland was in no haste, however, and wanted to know in advance the precise bounds of his powers and responsibilities, insisting that he must be head coach in fact as well as in name.

The manager, who had introduced himself as Jerry Hanscom of the Senior class, had a great deal to say during the conference, and was fluent in promises of loyal support by the team and the college. The captain nodded frequent assent, and appeared to agree in every particular; but his manner was perfunctory and self-conscious, as if he were not wholly frank. The faculty member, Professor Snell, was a sallow young man of pleasing address but obviously of no great force of character; and he remained in the background, confining his remarks to effusive generalities. The trio seemed to be not quite sincere, or so they impressed Kingsland, and he was curious to know why. They were united in wanting him as coach, however, and when his conditions had been accepted, one by one, he could discover no good reason for delaying the business. After their departure he turned the interview over in his candid mind, and said to himself:

"The manager, Mr. Jerry Hanscom, is an important person, or thinks he is, and he will try to

## THE HEAD COACH

have a finger in running the team. The captain—what was his name?—oh yes—Lawrence Martin—is a rather sulky young cub, and he is too much influenced by the manager; I gathered that much. The faculty adviser, Snell, is not very sure of himself, and he is not going to amount to much if it comes to backing me up in a clash of authority. Um-m-m, the proposition looks interesting. About three hundred students in the college, and a record of defeat in foot-ball through two straight seasons. There ought to be material for a good team there. I wonder what is wrong with the system. Lack of harmony somewhere—that much is easy to guess, from what I have seen.”

At the proper time, and with due form, Kingsland summoned a meeting of the ministerial committee of his church and asked that he be allowed to shift his vacation season. There swiftly arose, with portentous mien, the senior deacon, old Ezra Stiles, who tugged at his white beard while he petulantly inquired:

“May I ask Brother Kingsland why he wants to be away from the village in the fall instid of mid-summer, which is the proper time for ministers’ vacations, when hayin’ is goin’ on, an’ it’s hotter ’n tar, an’ everybody is too dog-tired to go to church? I ain’t had no vacation in seventy-odd years, an’ I’m as spry as most of ’em.”

## THE PARISH OF MASON CORNERS

Kingsland flushed and sprang to his feet to reply with emphasis:

"I did not ask for any vacation when I came here. The church offered it to me. And I expect to have the pulpit supplied by a good man as long as I am absent. I will pay him out of my own pocket. I am not supposed to do this much, but I can afford it this year because I shall be earning money during my vacation by coaching the Jameson College football team. This kind of vacation will do me an immense amount of good, mentally and physically."

Deacon Stiles still held the floor, and his cracked voice was ballasted with stubborn, shocked protest as he declared:

"I don't approve of our minister's coachin' no college foot-ball teams, nor any other pack of young rapscallions. I druv th' coach here in my younger days; but that was a decent kind of coachin', that a man need not be ashamed to own up to in his old age. This teachin' boys to break their necks an' tear their clothes, as part of the eddication which their fathers is scrimpin' to pay for, goes dead ag'in' my principles. And I ain't going to vote for no such kind of vacation for our minister. How much money do you kal'late to get paid for it, Brother Kingsland, eh?"

Kingsland looked discomfited and gloomily bit his nails before he replied:

"Five hundred dollars and my expenses."



## THE HEAD COACH

Deacon Stiles raised his hands to high heaven, glared to right and left, and ejaculated, as if he had been stung by a red-hot poker:

"Five hundred dollars and his expenses! More'n our church pays him in a hull year! Five hundred dollars for two months of playin' tag with a passel o' boys an' a bladder full o' wind! Brethren, this is simply ridiculus. Nobody likes our minister more'n I do. He don't preach as much eternal damnation as I've been used to hearin', but he's the smartest man that ever come to our village—we all know that! However, an' be that as it may, I'm dead ag'in' this foot-ball scheme."

A younger and more progressive member of the committee tried to smooth Kingsland's suddenly troubled waters by warmly asserting, while Deacon Stiles frowned fiercely:

"Mr. Kingsland has worked night and day for the good of the church and Mason Corners, and mighty little we have done for him in return. If he can increase his income by teaching foot-ball in his vacation, I say God bless him, let him go ahead, and I hope he will lick the other fellows. As for what they're going to pay him, it is none of our business. He is worth it, or he wouldn't get it. We ought to be proud that he's got enough spunk and muscle and brains to be wanted so bad by Jameson College."

This was the voice of one crying in the wilderness,

## THE PARISH OF MASON CORNERS

however; for the other members of the committee, there being five in all, were evidently impressed by the arguments of that chronic obstructionist, Deacon Ezra Stiles. Kingsland tried to smooth the rebellious one and to meet the awkward situation with tact and patience, but he could see not an atom of wrong or impropriety in what he wished to do. When he showed no signs of yielding, they began to weaken, for not even Ezra Stiles was willing to force the issue much further. With one vote to spare the request was granted, a subdued chorus of grumbling dissent being led by Deacon Stiles, who was still scolding in his beard as he climbed into his muddy Concord wagon.

Kingsland's fists were clinched, and hot tears were in his eyes, as he walked alone to the humble boarding-house that he called home. He was wasting the best years of his life in trying to reach the hearts of such men as these, who did not in the least appreciate the sacrifices he had made in casting his lot among them. He was too even-tempered, however, to cherish resentments, and ere long he decided to try to win Deacon Stiles over and reduce the bellicose old gentleman to a milder mood. The siege was long and arduous; but shortly before his departure for Jameson College they met in front of the post-office, and the deacon observed, with a wintry smile and something like a chuckle:

## THE HEAD COACH

"You're plenty old enough to have put away childish things, Parson. But I've just been inside sendin' my subscription to the *Spindle Falls Gazette* for three months, to keep track of what you're doin' with them college foot-ball boys. Not that I approve of your teachin' them to massacre each other, for I'm dummed if I do; but we folks back here must keep an eye on you, an' I kal'late to follow you pretty close."

Kingsland was pleased and touched, and made haste to inform the deacon that Mason Corners would have reason to be proud of the team coached by its minister. And when the day came for taking the train to Spindle Falls, and the station platform was well filled with parishioners come to say good-by, Deacon Ezra Stiles was there to whisper hoarsely, with affection shining in his blinking old eyes:

"You ought to be 'shamed of yourself, Parson; but unless you lick 'em in good shape, don't you dare to come back to Mason Corners. We're turrible proud of you in this village, an' while this foot-ball is plain backslidin' an' a fall from grace, an' a snare of the devil, fur's I kin see, don't you let none of them rich churches kidnap you away from us, will you, hey?"

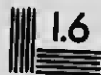
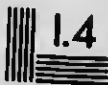
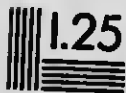
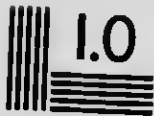


"But unless you lick 'em in good shape, don't you dare  
to come back to Mason Corners."



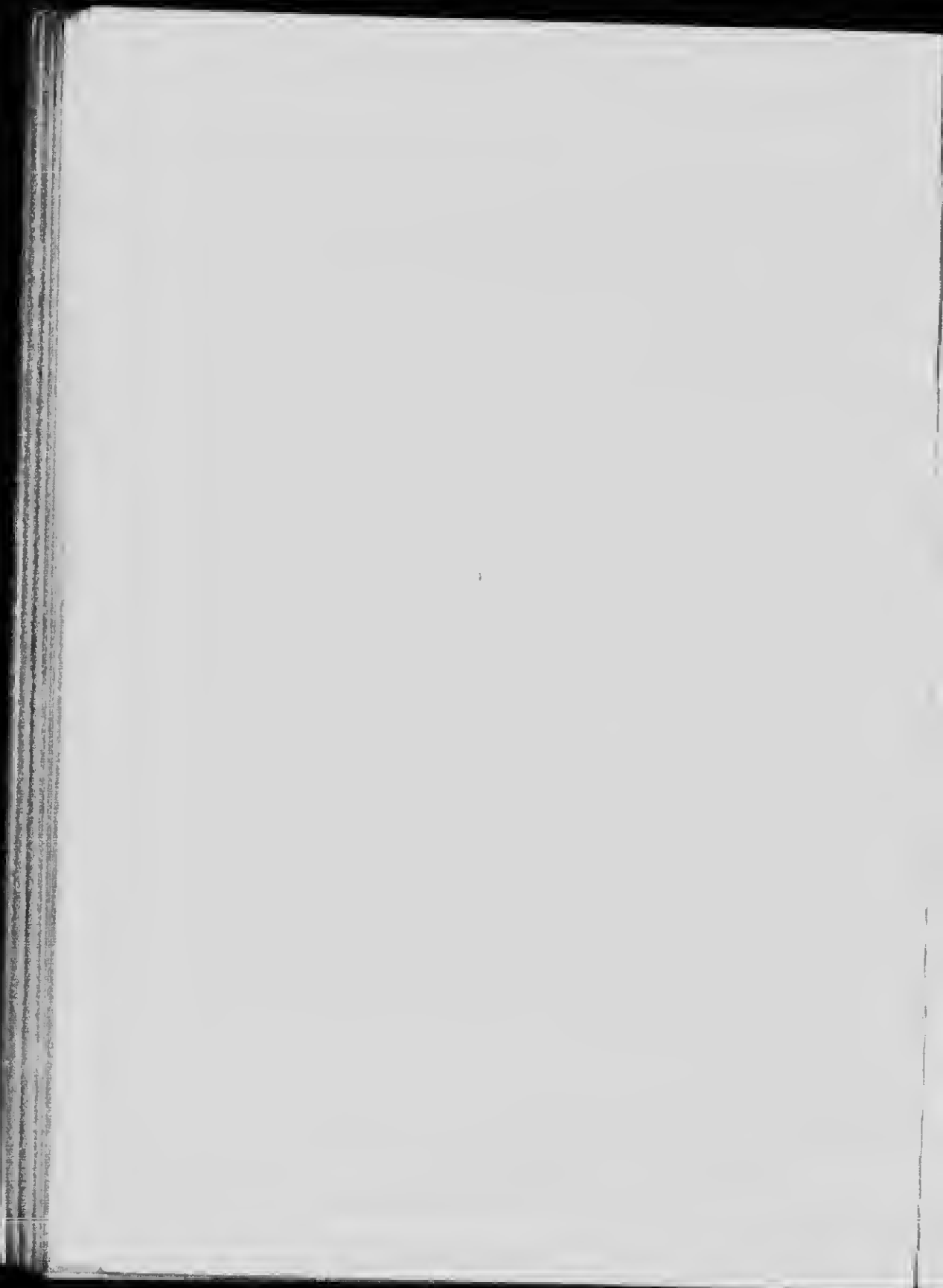
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## CHAPTER VI

### THE JAMESON COLLEGE ELEVEN

THE Jameson foot-ball squad had been engaged in preliminary practice for several days, falling on the ball, tackling the dummy, and jogging around the running track, before the new head coach was ready to select two elevens for the first line-up of the season. Kingsland had been closely scrutinizing and weighing his material, making no comments, noting the behavior of the men, not only on the field, but also in the work and play of the campus. The college life impressed him as novel in many respects. Accustomed as he was to the cosmopolitan atmosphere, the thousands of students, and the wealth of equipment of a great university, Jameson seemed meagre and cramped and its personnel singularly provincial. For the most part, its students were the sons of farmers, small merchants, and poorly paid professional men of Maine, Vermont, and New Hampshire. These lads were gaining a collegiate education with the smallest possible outlay, many of them working to support themselves in one way or another, cooking their own meals, taking care of their



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rooms, practising divers small and heroic economies such as were bred in the bone by virtue of Spartan New England training and tradition.

Small as the college was, its students burned with ambition to enjoy all the pleasures, privileges, and hall-marks which stamp the undergraduate of more ancient and powerful institutions of learning. They had their warring Greek-letter fraternities, their sanguinary "rushes" and outbreaks of hazing, and a barbaric assortment of class and college cheers. They turned up the bottoms of their trousers to high-water mark, and affected bull-dog pipes, cloth caps worn rakishly askew, and sweaters in place of waistcoats.

The college had its fine traditions of scholarship fostered by a devoted faculty, underpaid and undermanned; men of high attainments in their several fields, who loved the place and their work therein. A spirit of old-fashioned conservatism had for a long time prevailed against the recognition of organized athletics as an important part of the campus life and activity. The pressure of student opinion could not be withstood, however, and the faculty had yielded ground step by step. At this time the athletic interests of Jameson were too crude and new, so to speak, for traditions to have created the unwritten laws that bulwark the customs of Yale, Harvard, or Princeton. Sport was still in the forma-

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tive era, yet the foot-ball spirit was frenzied and rampant; and the rivalry between Jameson and Willoughby, a college of similar dimensions across the New Hampshire line, was acutely violent.

In order to secure the services of Kingsland as head coach, the undergraduate body had subscribed funds to the limit of its resources, while the alumni responded to the call for help with an enthusiasm hitherto unknown. Great things were expected of the new régime, which succeeded a rather chaotic system of coaching by old Jameson players willing to work with incentives of little cash and much loyalty. At his first meeting in the gymnasium with the half-hundred men who volunteered to try for the team, Kingsland had made a brief speech to this effect:

"Now, fellows, we want to turn out a winning eleven if we can; but there are other things even more important. You cannot expect to establish a successful system in one season, you know. There is a good deal more to foot-ball than winning one or two games. Victory is not worth while if there is even one man on the team who is not clean and straight and square in every way. If the rules of training are not lived up to on honor, if dirty play is tolerated for a moment, if the best men are not picked regardless of their social standing in the college, if the game is not to be played all the time in

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the spirit of gentlemen and sportsmen, then a college is a good deal better off without a foot-ball team. I shall be in authority, and my orders must be obeyed. I know you will all do your best to back me up, and I see no reason why Jameson cannot turn out the best eleven in her history."

These doctrines were received with apparent approval, and the horizon remained clear of all signs of trouble until the coach shifted the men about for the purpose of choosing a first or 'varsity team and beginning the daily practice games. Without consulting the captain, he soon relegated a stalwart guard, Jenkins by name, to the second eleven and sharply reproved him for grumbling at the decision. The captain, Lawrence Martin, seemed so disturbed over this matter that Kingsland later interviewed him in his room at the Kappa Beta Alpha fraternity house, determined to smother any mutinous spirit at the outset. The manager, Jerry Hanscom, happened to be present, and the head coach addressed them both very frankly:

"What is the matter with you, Martin? Have you any objections to my trying Jenkins out with the scrubs? If so, please tell me. You and I are working together to get results."

Captain Martin colored, avoided the coach's eye, and looked irresolutely toward the manager before he mumbled in reply:

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"Jenkins is an old player. He was on the 'varsity last year, and he belongs there now. We have only five veterans, and we can't afford to spare any one of them this season. I think you ought to have consulted me. The captain's opinion is worth something."

Kingsland waited a moment, trying to find words which should handle the situation without giving needless offence; but the manager, Hanscom, broke in with a loud voice and a noisier laugh:

"Oh, there isn't going to be any hard feeling. You needn't look so blamed flustered, Martin. Mr. Kingsland doesn't quite understand the ins and outs of the proposition. He hasn't been here long enough. I can put him wise in a jiffy. You see, sir, 'Pop' Jenkins is the most popular man in the Senior class, and a bully good fellow, plenty of money, and he has a big following among the students. Besides that"—here the manager's voice was lowered to an impressive pitch—"Jenkins is the president of Kappa Beta Alpha. It has been a custom for our fraternity to make a strong showing on the foot-ball team, and if you lose the backing of the chapter house it will be a serious blow to the college athletic interests this season."

Kingsland let him go no further, but inquired with dangerous deliberation:

"If you and Captain Martin and Jenkins belong

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to this Kappa Beta Alpha fraternity, how many more of the old players do you call brothers?"

"All of them. Our crowd manages to keep the foot-ball honors pretty well cinched," said Hanscom, with a satisfied smile.

Kingsland's blue eyes glittered, and he was not smiling as he replied:

"This Jenkins of yours has not pleased me. He is lazy, for one thing, and he has been shirking hard work in practice. I do not stand for that kind of thing. He was not in bed until after twelve o'clock last night, and his clothes smelled of cigarette smoke and his fingers were stained when he came into the dressing-room this afternoon. The training season began a week ago. I posted the notice on the bulletin board myself and explained the rules in a talk to the squad. You were present, Martin. I shall give Jenkins one more chance, and if he makes another slip off goes his head, and he will not be allowed to play even with the scrub eleven."

"Oh, come, now, Mr. Kingsland," cried Hanscom, with affected joviality. "Aren't you too hard on poor old 'Pop'? The men have always taken it for granted that strict training needn't begin until we play our early games with the other colleges on the schedule. Jenkins didn't understand. We will give him a talking to. The team simply can't afford to lose him—can it, Martin?"

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The captain fidgeted, and his face was clouded with irritation as he gathered courage to say:

"I am strong for putting Jenkins back on the 'varsity team. I don't see how we can find a guard to fill his shoes. If he quits, all the other Kappa Beta Alpha men may get sore, and——"

A covert gesture from Hanscom silenced him in the midst of what Kingsland comprehended to be an amazing threat. The situation was so different from anything he had dreamed of being compelled to face that he decided to spar for time and gather information from other sources. His emotions were rather novel, after wishing the pair of Kappa Beta Alpha brothers a courteous good-night and making a dignified exit. Their cheerful ignorance of the kind of college loyalty which he had absorbed in his own campus years was fairly staggering. To place the selfish interests of a fraternity ahead of the 'varsity eleven and to condone the violation of training rules with matter-of-fact nonchalance were crimes unheard of in his own experience, and he foresaw a pathway beset with obstructions.

Anxious to get his bearings, he lost no time in calling to see the faculty member of the athletic board, Professor Snell, whom he had first met at Mason Corners. There was a doggedness of purpose in Kingsland's demeanor as he entered the library of the cottage in "Faculty Row," and young

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Professor Snell scented trouble. He was genial to a degree and ready with praise of the work of the foot-ball squad; but Kingsland was in no mood for fencing and bore down upon his host with the challenging question:

"Is the faculty going to support me if I try to clean up this foot-ball situation and smash the fraternity pulls and such pernicious nonsense?"

Unwittingly, Professor Snell stuck his thumb in a waistcoat-pocket, and his coat was pulled back to reveal the gold badge of Kappa Beta Alpha. Its glitter caught Kingsland's notice and he smiled in spite of himself, suspecting that he had bungled matters by his frankness. Professor Snell coughed, adjusted his glasses, and his cheek was perceptibly flushed as he replied:

"The faculty expects to support you in every reasonable way, Mr. Kingsland. Our athletic interests are safe in the hands of a man of your high character. But what do you mean by 'fraternity pulls and such pernicious nonsense'? Has there been any friction or misunderstanding?"

"I disciplined Jenkins, the guard, and the manager and the captain sided with him because he belongs to Kappa Beta Alpha," curtly explained the head coach. "What do they mean by telling me that their—that your—fraternity has a right to run the foot-ball affairs of this college? Boys are biased

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and hot-headed, and I make allowances; but of course you can advise me impartially, Professor Snell."

"The fraternity system controls the social life of the college and requires delicate handling," was the oracular dictum. "It happens that for several years Kappa Beta Alpha has attracted the best foot-ball men. Omega Chi has taken a good many of the base-ball stars and track athletes, and Theta Epsilon seems to be the choice of the social leaders, the chairmen of the class committees, of the Junior Prom, and so on. Of course, there is no settled policy in this respect, and the faculty has no reason to interfere. Nearly all of your old players are Kappa Beta Alpha men, are they not, Mr. Kingsland? You cannot hope to turn out a creditable eleven without them. Jenkins was one of our stars last season, the only man who could gain ground in the championship game with Willoughby. I should advise that in dealing with him you exercise a certain amount of patience and tact. Not that I am at all prejudiced in the matter, but——"

"Thank you very much. Sorry to have bothered you. I will use my own discretion. No doubt it is a tempest in a teapot," said Kingsland, whose gorge was rising as he perceived that the faculty adviser was for trimming sail to keep in the same current with his younger brothers of Kappa Beta Alpha.



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No steadfast help was to be looked for in that quarter, and Kingsland went to bed in a bewildered state of mind.

Next day he ordered Jenkins to continue playing with the lowly scrubs, and sent in a stalwart lump of a Freshman as guard on the 'varsity. Captain Lawrence Martin looked grieved, and played his own position at tackle in such sullen, listless fashion that Kingsland stung him with caustic admonitions. This summary method of dealing with the captain of the eleven displeased the other veteran players, but they kept their emotions to themselves, unwilling to risk collision with the iron temper of the head coach. At length Kingsland overheard Martin mutter to one of his comrades in the rush line:

"Darn him, I'm not going to be blackguarded in public. The position of captain ought to be treated with some consideration. I am playing the game all right."

Kingsland smiled grimly and said never a word as he trotted from the field when the half was ended and hurried to the gymnasium, where he shifted into foot-ball gear and pulled over his head a blue sweater emblazoned with the "Y" of the Yale eleven. When he rejoined the squad he told one of the scrub tackles to step aside, and took his place in the line facing the scowling captain. There followed fifteen minutes of such fast foot-ball as young Lawrence

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Martin had never experienced in his vain and callow career. Kingsland trampled over him, tossed him this way and that, made his teeth rattle, drove him at top speed, until he was breathless and bleeding. At the end of this harrowing performance, Kingsland, who was cool and unruffled, called after the crest-fallen captain:

"That is the way I expect you to play every afternoon if you want to hold your place on the team, my son. No more loafing on this field. It won't do at all."

Stung to the quick because of his sorry exhibit in the sight of the crowd of undergraduates on the side lines, Martin flung discipline to the winds and savagely bellowed:

"You will have to play for the whole team if you don't look out. They won't stand for your shoving any more old players on the scrub eleven. I'll have something to say about that."

Kingsland was so nearly out of earshot that he did not trouble to reply, but strolled toward the gymnasium, whistling between his teeth, reflecting how very much alike were the unlikened cubs of all colleges and generations. He felt better for the hard physical exercise of the foot-ball field, younger and more buoyant of spirit. This promised to be a missionary field after his own heart, a field in which hard knocks were to be dealt and endured. It was

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to be a lone-handed fight unless he should be able to find the right kind of friend and adviser.

This friend appeared sooner than expected. That very evening Kingsland opened his door at the sound of vigorous rapping and confronted a rosy young man of about his own age who had a smile of the most engaging frankness and a pair of black eyes that danced with humor and vivacity. Kingsland knew that he was going to like this attractive visitor, who announced with great gusto as he flung himself into a chair:

"Well, Mr. Kingsland, you must think we are a poor lot, judging us by first impressions. Oh, pardon me; I am Arthur Holt, assistant professor of modern languages. I was at the field to-day and with much glee observed you standing young Lawrence Martin upon his cantankerous head. The report is going around that you intend to defy the fraternities and run the team as you please. The students refuse to believe it, but I fancy they are badly mistaken. I dropped in to say that I am with you, heart and soul. I am not popular with the older faculty set because I speak my own mind, usually at the top of my voice. It is splendid of you, Mr. Kingsland. You are a man after my own heart."

To this unlooked-for ally Kingsland replied, in considerable perplexity:

"But why the dickens should the fraternities run

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the college, Mr. Holt? I asked the same question of Professor Snell, and he dodged it with great agility."

"Oh, Snell is the original human jelly-fish," was the careless response. "This little college has too much picayune politics and jealousy, my dear Mr. Head Coach. The president is a learned, timid old gentleman who ought to be shelved with a retiring pension, and dealing at close range with the untamed undergraduate rather appalls him. We have no dormitories, and the fraternity houses take their place as living quarters and run their own internal affairs about as they please. The younger men of the faculty are more or less dominated by the conservative old gentlemen who regard questions of athletic morale and politics as belonging to the playground and therefore not worth a radical ruction of any kind. Those amiable fossils do not realize it, but the students are their own masters outside of the class-rooms."

Kingsland glowered at the animated speaker, more and more surprised, but beginning to understand. With his hard-headed sense he sought the root of the matter and said, in his meditative way:

"I suppose that I am apt to forget that it takes a good many generations to build up the customs that govern my kind of a college. The faculty cannot make binding traditions. But it seems to me most important that a start be made on the right track.

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I do not care how unpopular I may make myself. They need not ask me to coach another year. Speaking frankly to you, Mr. Holt, I meant it straight from the shoulder when I said that I was going to put principles ahead of winning games."

"I am afraid some of the boys took that talk of yours in the gymnasium as part of the regular programme," replied the other, "the sort of thing that is said every season in order to keep the faculty in good humor because it sounds well. Other coaches have talked in the same way and then winked at breaches of discipline and cursed and blackguarded the players. Why, we had one man here whose profanity became threadbare by hard usage and failed to sting, so he used to shoot blank cartridges from a big navy revolver at the half-backs to make them start with more ginger. He won the game with Willoughby College and that made him a hero at Jameson."

"Are the Freshmen taken into these high-and-mighty fraternities?" asked Kingsland, rubbing his jaw with an absent-minded air while he grinned at the notion of the swearing coach and the revolver.

"No, not until the spring term; but of course the Freshies stand in awe of the fraternity upper classmen and try not to queer themselves."

"There is some excellent Freshman foot-ball material this year," murmured Kingsland, deciding to

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keep his own counsel and work out his problem a step at a time. Arthur Holt rose to go and, hesitating at the threshold, exclaimed with his bright, boyish manner:

"I hope you will not think that I have been too forward, rushing in with advice and what not. You are strong enough to go your own gait and batter down obstacles. My intentions are good, however, and—and——"

Kingsland took him by the hand and replied:

"I shall need all the friends I can muster, Mr. Holt. And I think that you and I can do some team-work. Not that I am going to take it upon myself to reform Jameson College. I am only a country parson, and a pretty poor one at that. I have been hired to teach foot-ball during my vacation, and I shall try to earn my money."

## CHAPTER VII

### A FOOT-BALL MUTINY

WHEN it was time to go to the field next day, Kingsland put on his foot-ball clothes, planning to shift from one position to another and show his pupils that he was as fit to give and take hard knocks as any of them. A trim, active, stocky figure of a man he was, almost as hard and vigorous as during his years of college training; for it was a tenet of his simple gospel to match a healthy mind with a sound body, which duty he both sturdily lived and preached. The players were scampering over the field when he joined them, and the side lines were black with chattering groups of students. Most of the college appeared to have turned out to watch the routine practice, an enthusiastic patronage which the head coach was pleased to see as showing an awakening interest in the team. He was about to call them together, when the Freshman guard, Pumpelly by name, who had supplanted the veteran Jenkins, hastened up and whispered, with labored composure, while he nodded toward a crowd of youths at the edge of the field:

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"The Kappa Beta Alpha men are massed together, sir, and a lot of their heelers besides. There must be a hundred in all. They intend to make trouble if you don't put 'Pop' Jenkins back on the 'varsity eleven this afternoon. Shall I keep on in his place or do you want me to drop out? I'm not afraid, but—but—I don't want to see you mobbed."

Kingsland looked up at the slouching, awkward young colossus with an affectionate smile. Here, at least, was loyalty, and he knew how much it meant to the lad to take sides against the fraternity influence. Patting him on the shoulder, he told him cheerfully:

"Thanks, Pumpelly. You are a sandy boy. Just you play guard for all you are worth, and I will take care of Jenkins. There will be no mobbing to-day."

Kingslar<sup>3</sup> raised his strong voice so that it carried to the hostile element, and there was incisive command in his summons:

"Line up, fellows. 'Varsity side takes the ball. Same playing order as yesterday. Jenkins stays as guard on the scrubs. Pumpelly plays on the 'varsity against him. If you don't brace up and show me a harder, faster game to-day, all of you, there will be some more changes in the line-up."

There was a stir in the Kappa Beta Alpha assemblage, and the noisy foot-ball manager, Jerry Hans-



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com, who seemed to be the ringleader, began to talk and gesticulate to his comrades. They moved uneasily and drifted as by a common impulse across the chalked boundary of the field and encroached upon the playing area. Hanscom was making a pretence of trying to quiet and herd them back, but his exertions were half-hearted. The two rush lines were struggling in a scrimmage when the disturbers began to chant loudly:

"We want 'Pop' Jenkins, the Old Reliable!"

"Jameson must have Jenkins!"

"Throw out the big Freshman stuff!"

Kingsland, with quick sympathy, glanced at Pumpelly; but the Freshman was sticking manfully to his task, with no sign of flinching, and, furthermore, he was giving the coveted Jenkins more than he could handle. Stimulated by this pleasing sight, the head coach left the 'varsity eleven, with which he was playing half-back, and ran toward the disturbers, who subsided as he raised his hand for silence and said sternly:

"We are unable to hear the signals. Please get off the field if you want to practise cheering. We can't have all this fuss. Mr. Hanscom, can you not stop it? This is your foot-ball team as much as it is mine."

After all, these were boys, and a two-fisted, resolute man confronted them. They were quick to feel

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his authority, his superiority, and his right to rebuke them; and the tumult died in sulky, abashed murmurings and empty laughs. Kingsland turned his back and walked toward the waiting players. The captain, Lawrence Martin, was smiling and waving his cap at the rioters with a genial air of comradeship. The head coach gritted his teeth, and his sinewy hands were tight shut, while an odd pallor showed through the sunburn of his cheek. He was seldom angry, and his temper had been schooled to hard-bitted control, but his voice was unsteady as he looked the captain straight between the eyes and said:

"So you approve of such conduct as those rowdy friends of yours are guilty of, do you? You stand here and laugh at them instead of being the first man to go over and tell them to keep still? You think they are right in raising this row about Jenkins and disgracing themselves and the college? You know exactly why I disciplined Jenkins. Well, you can take a dose of the same medicine. Get over there with the scrubs yourself for the rest of the afternoon and play tackle."

The captain chewed his lip, shuffled awkwardly, turned to look at his distant friends, as if hoping for reinforcements, then did as he was told, cowed and silenced by a stronger will than his own. The Kappa Beta Alpha mob was aghast. This was

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nothing short of sacrilege! Lawrence Martin degraded in sight of the whole college—the captain of the eleven abused, for no cause whatever, by a domineering tyrant of a coach hired for wages! Evidently, however, Kingsland was not to be intimidated, and with more discretion than valor these objectors contented themselves with groans, cat-calls, and dolorous hoots, mingled with spasmodic cheers for the brace of martyrs, “Pop” Jenkins and Lawrence Martin. Paying no more heed to them, Kingsland grimly drove his teams through twenty minutes of fiery play. There followed an interval of rest, during which Jerry Hanscom approached and protested, solemnly wagging his head:

“I tried to suppress the fellows, Mr. Kingsland, but they feel pretty sore, and no wonder. College sentiment is a hard thing to handle. About the captain—well, you see, he was elected by the team, and of course, you know, he can’t be chucked without their consent. You don’t expect to keep him with the scrubs, do you?”

“Perhaps the team will vote for a new captain,” said Kingsland.

“Martin holds the majority of votes and he will have to stay on the team,” rejoined Hanscom, with much self-assurance. “Better not go ahead without looking. My advice is worth something to you. We are working for the same results.”

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The head coach made no answer but turned toward the bench whereon he had flung his sweater, for the October afternoon was chill with the bracing zest of the New England autumn. Striding with head down, bemused with his own thoughts, he stepped aside to avoid collision, and glanced up to find himself facing his classmate of New Haven, Reverend Jared Whittaker, and a companion, who was a young woman of so much beauty and dignity as to suggest the simile of the moth and the flame. Not that Jared would have likened himself to the lowly moth—indeed, he was in quite a butterfly mood and attire, which was duly noted by George Kingsland as soon as he could shift his startled gaze from the face of the girl who met his quick scrutiny with a cool, level glance in which there was perceptible disapproval. Jared Whittaker, dapper in tweeds, a colored tie, and a soft gray hat, offered a slim hand to Kingsland and blandly remarked:

“Delighted to see you, old man. I have been meaning to look you up, of course, but I was in Boston last week and have been rushed with engagements ever since. Miss Brewster, may I present my Yale classmate, Mr. Kingsland?”

Miss Brewster bowed distantly. She was tall, almost Kingsland's height, and she persisted in gazing over his head as if he were the least interesting feature of the landscape. Conscious that he

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had impressed her unfavorably, he was ill at ease. His face was streaked with grime and sweat, his battered foot-ball togs were caked and stained and patched with bits of string, and his blue jersey was out at the elbows. Nervously he replied to Whittaker's greeting:

"Sorry I happen to be such a scarecrow, but I have to practise what I preach. I hope to see something of you while I am here, Whittaker. Look me up when you have time, won't you?"

Whittaker cast a worshipping glance at his fair companion and said, with pride:

"Miss Brewster consented to let me bring her to the field to-day." Then he lost countenance and rather stumbled as he went on to say: "She knows some of the players and—and—is personally interested in them."

Kingsland turned to the frowning divinity and ventured to ask:

"Were you here in time to see the little disagreement that was forced on me, Miss Brewster? It was really very trying."

"Mr. Martin, the captain, is my cousin," said she, and Kingsland wilted in his tracks. "The episode to which you refer must have been very trying to him, if that is what you mean?"

Kingsland colored to the eyes and turned helplessly to Jared as if seeking comfort and support.

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But Whittaker had no intention of committing himself and replied, with smiling uncton:

"You always were a man for violent measures, 'Deacon.' Do you remember the intruder whom you were pounding with the leg of a chair in the mission meeting when the policeman separated you? I am a great believer in tact, so really I am not competent to judge of to-day's clash with the fraternity men and the captain."

"You are putting me in a wrong light," said Kingsland, trying not to show resentment. "I won't argue the matter. Pardon me, Miss Brewster, but do you think I am a headstrong, brutal bungler?"

This direct appeal rather shocked her, and her dark eyes were distinctly unfriendly and reproving as she responded, driven to take up his challenge:

"There has never been any friction between the coach and the players at Jameson, so the scene was so unusual that I was very much surprised. Lawrence Martin is considered one of the nicest fellows and finest athletes in college."

"He attends my church, as do many of the students," eagerly added Jared Whittaker by way of confirmation. "Splendid young men, all of them. I am most fortunate to have gained such a hold on the college church-goers, 'Deacon.' It is a most stimulating field of service."

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"You are to be congratulated, Whittaker, as is Miss Brewster for being found in such excellent company as yourself," gravely returned the coach, who looked at the clock in the library tower and added: "Time to begin the second half. I may have to be more brutal and tactless than ever, Jared, so don't stay if it annoys you."

With a frigid bow to Miss Brewster, which she returned in kind, Kingsland stalked across the field, conscious that he had made himself exceedingly disagreeable but regretting it not a whit. Jared Whittaker had been more lofty and patronizing than of yore. It was plain to read that, in his opinion, Kingsland had fallen from his estate as a clergyman, even an unsuccessful one, and in his sorry foot-ball raiment was a most displeasing figure. As for the girl, she did not pity him, she misunderstood and disliked him; and this belief had power to make Kingsland oddly uncomfortable. He had admired her on sight, and he wanted her to think well of him. It never entered his mind, however, to curry favor by weakening his attitude toward the eleven or treating the captain with less righteous severity.

This was no time for reflections which veered near the edge of the sentimental, and the head coach lined up his men and tucked the ball under his arm to lead a formation against tackle. A few minutes

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later he skirted the end with dexterous agility and swung the contest over toward the left side of the field. The Kappa Beta Alpha crowd had clustered in this quarter and threatened to interfere with the manoeuvres of the eleven. Kingsland courteously requested them to clear the field, but they continued to press forward until play had to be suspended. He told the quarter-back to hold the ball out of play, and advanced toward the jostling, laughing mob to say to them:

"You fellows are deliberately interfering with the work of your foot-ball team. You think you are not going to let us finish the game unless I give in and let you run matters. I will not give in, and you are going to get off this field."

He turned and called to the players, who were waiting in a silent, curious group:

"Throw these loafers off the field, if you please. I will show you how."

The group of players instantly divided into two factions. The members of Kappa Beta Alpha, led by the captain, hung back, refusing to obey. The resolute Freshman guard, Joseph Pumpelly, eyed them with vast contempt, spun round, and roared, with a tremendous voice:

"Come on, Freshmen, and everybody else that has any sand in his gizzard. We stand by the coach. Hooray—pitch into 'em!"



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Substitutes who heard this trumpet call came dashing over the turf, flinging aside their sweaters, and with whoops of defiance followed at the heels of the valiant Pumpelly. The fraternity swarm was for showing fight, having much the better of it in point of numbers, but their warlike spirit flickered out like a candle in a wind. Kingsland dived at the nearest of them, tackled him low, flung him over his shoulder, and passed on to the next, handling them like so many sacks of meal. Pumpelly and the loyal Freshmen cohort ploughed right and left, bowling over fleeing obstructionists or dragging them from the field by the collars.

The cane of one foeman smote Kingsland smartly across the eyes and spoiled his vision for a moment, during which he upset and dumped into an inviting patch of mud a sputtering young man clad in a tweed suit. To the horror of the coach, the voice which saluted him in tones of anguish was the voice of Jared Whittaker, who was clawing after the wreck of his natty gray hat and bemoaning his damaged pantaloons and dignity. The rout was so complete by now that Kingsland had time to halt and ruefully exclaim:

"What on earth were you doing in this crowd, Whittaker? Awfully sorry I spilled you. It was an accident—upon my word it was."

"I—I was requested by Miss Brewster to cross

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the field and express her sympathy to Captain Martin," sputtered Jared, who was very literally gritting his teeth, for he had landed upon his scholarly countenance. "Ugh!—whew!—I was about to address the captain, having some trouble to make my way through the crowd, when—you attacked me with unprovoked violence, Kingsland. I accept your apology with Christian meekness, but your conduct has been abominable, and I regret that I have to call you a college classmate."

"Oh, you will cool off and become less hostile, I trust," returned Kingsland, who had the insolence to smile at the plight of the other. "You were in bad company, Whittaker. You were siding against me, actually going out of your way to identify yourself with a disgraceful mob of students and their leader, who are fighting my efforts to build up a clean, manly spirit in the athletics of this college."

"It was Miss Brewster's wish," feebly returned Whittaker, who was brushing his rumpled garments, with Kingsland's perfunctory aid.

"Blame it on the woman, Jared. You have a sound Scriptural precedent for that."

Whittaker wrapped himself in his damaged dignity and refused to bandy words. Kingsland watched him limp from the scene of battle and reluctantly rejoin the waiting girl, whose demeanor was so unmistakably hostile toward the coach that

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he shivered and very devoutly wished that she had remained away from this field of carnage. The shattered host of Kappa Beta Alpha had made a disorderly retreat, and Pumpelly and his loyal Freshmen athletes were crowing like so many cocks. Kingsland thought best to call an end of the practice for the day, and the disgruntled veterans strayed off toward the gymnasium, together with a few of their satellites, while Pumpelly delayed to say to the coach:

"We did our best, but I suppose we are all queered for life with the fraternity gangs. I don't care. I intend to stick by you. And I talked it over with my pals on the team, and they are with me."

A farmer's son was young Pumpelly, raw-boned, deep-chested, hard of muscle; and Kingsland knew that he would be no easier to budge from his convictions than one of the granite ledges of his own hill-sides. He was a lieutenant worth having, and the coach, realizing the heroic quality of his defiance of public opinion, made haste to assure him:

"You are not going to lose by it. And what if you do? Doesn't college amount to anything more than getting into a fraternity with a lot of rowdies who don't know how to appreciate your kind of a man?"

"Well, my dad didn't send me here for a fraternity education," and Joseph Pumpelly's freckled cheeks

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stretched in a whole-toothed grin. "He'd a heap sight rather see me grow up your kind of a college man. I figured that out all by myself."

Kingsland's heart warmed to the boy who was already stamping himself as a leader in his own class, and they trudged to the gymnasium arm in arm, the other faithful ones trailing behind, not quite sure in their minds whether to be proud of or sorry for their day's work. When Kingsland went to his boarding-house he found the assistant professor, Arthur Holt, waiting on the piazza. This cheery counsellor danced an undignified jig step, waved his hat over his head, and chortled:

"Hail to the chief! On this day was history made for Jameson College! I was there, but you were so energetic that I feared to get within gunshot lest you tip me on the head. There is one decent restaurant in Spindle Falls. Come with me and for once dodge the soggy biscuit and the fried steak. This is my celebration."

Kingsland needed no urging, and, remarking that he was hungry enough to eat a fraternity man or two, he followed the lead of his vivacious friend whose spirits were at high tide. What was passing in Kingsland's mind may be gleaned from his query, which had nothing to do with foot-ball:

"Who was the girl with Jared Whittaker? I know her name, but I crave more information."

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"Ho, ho!" and Holt's black eyes sparkled. "So you had time to notice Mildred Brewster! We all find time for that, no matter how busy we are. She is a niece of the Dean of the college and dwells in his household, and is a power behind the throne, as it were. All the students are in love with her, and most of the faculty; that goes without saying. Behold in me one of her most hopeless and harmless victims. Her age? Passing twenty-one. Affections unattached, as far as I know. Type of beauty? Stately brunette, as you may have perceived. Temper? Rather imperious and cocksure, I fancy. Your whole foot-ball team raves about her, so she really comes within your official ken. Was she cordial to you?"

"Not so that you could perceive it with the naked eye, Holt. In fact, her manner was positively frost-bitten. It was like facing an early touch of winter with no overcoat. So she, too, sides with the enemy and sees nothing but good in the fraternity spirit of Jameson?"

"Well, rather. How can she help it? She is the belle of the undergraduate dances and of the teas and receptions in the chapter houses; and when I last met her she was wearing a Kappa Beta Alpha pin looted from one of her slaves. You have taken the wrong tack to win the favor of Miss Mildred Brewster."

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Kingsland was silent, and appeared to be much interested in his own thoughts, until the cheering influences of well-cooked food and passable coffee spurred his mood to conversation. Meanwhile, Arthur Holt cocked a merry, sympathizing eye at him, and made little bantering remarks about the girl in the case, which caused the ingenuous coach to blush, to the undisguised delight of his tormentor. In Mason Corners, Kingsland had steered clear of feminine entanglements with no great effort, although the matchmakers of the parish had concocted futile plots to snare him. He was not susceptible to passing fancies; thus far he had gone scot-free of falling in love, but now he was conscious of the undeniable fact that he had met a girl worth fighting for.

So Jared Whittaker had dared to cast eyes in that same direction, and his strategy of the afternoon had been cleverly devised. He had so colored his speech as to make Kingsland's avocation of foot-ball coach seem belittling and even contemptible in her sight, as if a failure of a clergyman had found his proper level as a quick-tempered bully. Kingsland's face wore a puzzled scowl as he harked back in thought to the years at Yale, when he had been the leader who stood for aggressive righteousness and honor in all things, while Jared Whittaker was the unknown, jaundiced "grind" swinging no influence whatever. The tables had been turned with a

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vengeance, and Kingsland's simplicity of word and motive could not cope with the weapons of Whittaker's arsenal. However, the "brilliant young pulpit orator of Spindle Falls" had been stood on his head in the mud of the foot-ball field, to show that Justice is not so blind as she is painted. This grain of comfort gave Kingsland a most unholy gleam of satisfaction. To his surprise, Arthur Holt demolished the reverie with the apt remark:

"Yes, our friend Whittaker must have accumulated an acute dislike for you this afternoon. His bump of self-esteem is over-developed and you jarred it horribly."

"My thoughts are easy to read," smiled Kingsland. "Whittaker surprised me by not playing quite fair when he introduced me to Miss Brewster. His manner prickled me like a bramble bush. But I surprised him in turn, and we are all even to date. Is he a popular man in the town and among the people of the college?"

"A brilliant intellect—more head than heart—more talk than solid achievement—ambition that fairly eats him up," was Holt's concise summary. "He strikes me as immature for his years—top-heavy, as it were. He has the wealthiest church in the town, patronized by such culture and fashion as Spindle Falls can boast of. The President and the Dean of the college are among the pillars of his tabernacle,

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and of course most of the faculty follow their lead. How did he stand at Yale?"

"A hard student. I didn't know him very well. We travelled with different crowds and had few interests in common," briefly answered Kingsland. "I shall go to church to hear him preach next Sunday."

"The courtesy of the cloth demands that he invite you to fill his pulpit at least once while you are here," suggested Holt.

"He is not likely to ask me. He has a poor opinion of my preaching ability."

"U-m-m, it is my poor belief that you live better sermons every day than Reverend Jared Whittaker could preach in a thousand years," said the other, with unwonted earnestness.

With this they parted company and Kingsland strolled campusward alone. Moonlight softened the commonplace outlines of the college buildings scattered here and there with no evidence of a general design. The landscape held a gracious peace and dignity denied it by day. The looming halls, the guardian elms, the cloistered aspect of lawn and walk and pillared porch swept Kingsland's memory back to the treasured days of his undergraduate youth when, amid such scenes as these, he had dreamed of the larger life beyond. He had thought himself a man, but he had been no more than a boy, after all—a boy such as were these wrong-headed



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Jameson youngsters. They were as good as the average, and he had shown impatience and intolerance. It seemed to him that he had bungled his career all the way along. He would try to be more forgiving, charitable, long-suffering.

In this self-accusing mood, he yielded to a sudden impulse to call at the Kappa Beta Alpha chapter house and talk the situation out with the hostile faction, explain as well as he could what he was trying to do, and endeavor to appeal to their latent sense of fair play. A few minutes later he crossed the porch of the old-fashioned village mansion and rang the bell. While he waited, one of the fraternity men turned in from the street, brushed past the coach, and pushed open the unlocked door, closing it behind him. Then Kingsland heard the sound of hasty footsteps within, but no one came near the door. Again he rang the bell and patiently waited for some response. They knew that he was outside, but he was not to be granted admittance. He heard loud laughter which rang in his ears with peculiar insolence. This was their method of declaring war. The brutal discourtesy of it stung him like a whip. He could do nothing but retreat. From across the street he turned to gaze at the lighted windows, and murmured, with the jaunty upward thrust of his chin:

"So they want a fight to a finish! Well! This campaign grows more and more interesting."

## CHAPTER VIII

### AN UPHILL FIGHT

IN the eyes of the college at large the work of the head coach was to be weighed according to the number of games won. While the hostile fraternity faction directly controlled no more than one-third of the undergraduates, yet theirs was bound to be the popular viewpoint. Jameson did not hire football players; its hands were clean of overt professionalism: and it rather prided itself on being better than several rival colleges. For a coach to insist on setting the place by the ears, humiliating the veteran players who were the demigods of the campus, and enforcing the letter of the law in a manner foreign and wholly unreasonable was too much to be peaceably endured. The mind of youth is akin to that of the sheep in that it follows the bell-wether, and in this instance the foot-ball captain and his comrades were in the van, with most of the college trooping blindly after.

The first scheduled game of the season was played against the team of a small Vermont college whose

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Press Jameson had been wont to hold in slight esteem. Kingsland labored diligently to prepare his eleven, but the spirit of sullen dissension in the ranks hampered him at every turn. As if ashamed of the rebuff they had caused him to suffer at the door of the Kappa Beta Alpha chapter house, Captain Martin and his companions of the team made no more threats of mutiny; but the tension was not relieved, and the coach was perturbed and uncertain of the future. What he feared came to pass in this game, which was played on the Jameson field. His eleven did not show its best form. The formation was ragged and wavering with a sad lack of driving power. The veterans played as if fagged by over-training and were easily pushed back or blocked. The green men, among whom Joseph Pumpelly was the most conspicuous, fought manfully and honestly, but they could not win without whole-hearted support. Jameson was played off its feet, beaten by two touch-downs, and humiliated in sight of its partisans.

It was the manager, Hanscom, who had the temerity to accost Kingsland in this gloomy moment and suggest:

"What are you going to do about the gate receipts? Our team is going to be a poor drawing card if we can't lick these easy marks. The college won't turn out and pay good money to see us made a holy show

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of. The situation is going to be serious, I tell you."

"Why don't you blame the men on your team who were traitors to their college this afternoon?" retorted Kingsland, with a bitterness he could not repress. "They threw the game away. We ought to have won by at least twenty points. My contract is binding, and I propose to stay through the season. Go talk to your captain and your team. I want to cool off before I tell them what I think of them."

"All they needed was 'Pop' Jenkins at guard," suavely replied the manager. "He would have put life in the rush line—made it like a stone wall. You can't expect to turn out a Jameson eleven with a mob of raw Freshmen."

Kingsland shrugged his shoulders, turned on his heel, and walked alone to the gymnasium.

That night the campus seethed with indignation. The colors of Jameson had been trailed in the dust. For the first time in its foot-ball history that picayune team from Vermont had triumphed, and on the home grounds. Something must be wrong with this highly paid coach from Yale. The captain of the team, Lawrence Martin, moved in a cloud of gloom somewhat lightened by the sympathy of his zealous admirers. His behavior was that of one martyred by circumstances beyond his control. Kingsland wasted no words on him, but sat in his room and chewed the

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of reflection. For a long time he stared at the ceiling, his hands clasped behind his head, and little by little threshed out a decision which was the logical result of the stand he had taken. Then he briskly footed it to the other end of the college boundary where Joseph Pumpelly lived in humble lodgings.

The robust Freshman was discovered in the act of darning a pair of trousers, while two of his football classmates passed critical remarks from their perch upon a dry-goods box that served as a desk. The room was tucked under the eaves, and it was evident that Joseph must walk warily or bang his head against the sloping walls. He arose hastily, yet with practised caution, ducking forward without damage to the plaster, and shook Kingsland's proffered hand with a huge red paw beyond which gleamed a knobby wrist that the coat sleeve failed to cover by several inches. His friends clattered from off the box and were much confused by the unexpected honor of this visit.

Kingsland sat himself down upon a rickety chair which teetered skittishly, and felt the cockles of his heart warm at sight of this trio of tried and trusted adherents. Their faith and admiration were plain to read.

"I have been thinking things over since the game to-day," said the coach. "We lost because some of

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the team didn't want to win. Pumpelly, how many men now in the 'varsity line-up are backing my policy?"

The blushing Freshman solemnly tallied the roll of the faithful on his fingers and made reply:

"I am sure of no more than five that aren't tarred with the Kappa Beta Alpha brush, sir, or who refuse to let Lawrence Martin lead them by the nose. We Freshmen are with you. I don't have to tell you that. We were talking it over before you came in, and we believe in your kind of athletics."

"Good enough!" cried the coach, and his eyes were moist with honest emotion. "Now, I am going to take you three men into my confidence. An election will be held to-morrow for a new captain, if you can drum up one more vote to give us six men to five for the fraternity crowd. Is there another player who is worth while talking to?"

"No, not unless you use a club," dismally vouchsafed Joseph.

"Then Martin goes off the team," exclaimed the coach. "I have a right to shift him to the scrubs, and I'll put one of the substitutes in his place to-morrow. Two can play at politics, if the other side is determined to force my hand. How about Macgruder? Is he the right sort? I have been thinking about putting him in Martin's place as a tackle."

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"Macgruder comes from my county, and he is just butt-headed enough to take the short end of any proposition!" thundered Pumpelly, waving his fist in high glee. "You can count on him. If he even hesitates, I'll lick him—and it won't be the first time either."

"That settles it," affirmed Kingsland, gingerly quitting the decrepit chair and giving each Freshman a hand-clasp that made him wince. "I have heard all I want to know. Don't get discouraged. We have a hard row to hoe, but for the first time this season it looks as if we might hammer out a creditable foot-ball team. Good-night, and God bless you."

There was no lack of spectators next afternoon when Kingsland called the players together to make ready for getting the practice under way. The rumor had spread throughout the college that the coach was disgusted with the performance of the team against the men from Vermont, and was bent on mending matters without consulting either the captain or the athletic management. The curious crowds were silent. The fraternity men had learned their lesson, and made no sign of invading the field or of raising their voices in behalf of the deposed "Pop" Jenkins. As if it were prearranged, Joseph Pumpelly and the other Freshmen grouped themselves beside Kingsland like a body-guard, while the captain and his friends drew a little apart by them-

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selves. The tableau was significant and did not escape the notice of the beholders. Kingsland stood with his heels together, his hands on his hips, the blue jersey clinging close to his muscular chest and arms. He may have been nervous, but his voice was low and almost monotonously matter of fact as he announced to the clustered players:

"Martin is shifted from the 'varsity line and goes to right tackle on the scrubs to-day. Your work was inexcusably bad yesterday, Martin. Most of the straight advances were made through your side of the line."

The captain stared as if the news had stunned him. The color left his face, he seemed to be in want of breath, and he blinked with a ludicrous expression of bewilderment. Then he stepped toward Kingsland, halted as if flinching from his hasty purpose, and turned to face his little company of friends. It may be worth noting that Joseph Pumpelly had moved forward, without orders, and was glowering at the captain with challenging menace, as if anxious to relieve the coach of any annoyance. When Martin found voice it was to sputter in explosive rage:

"Anybody could see you had it in for me! You can't fire me from the team as you did Jenkins. What do you think you are trying to do, you swelled-headed bully? Are the rest of you fellows going to stand for this kind of a coach?"



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"Hurry up, Martin. Time to put the ball in play. Macgruder, play left tackle on the 'varsity until further notice," said Kingsland. Captain Martin led his band of players apart from the others and harangued them with windmill gestures. He was evidently inciting them to mutiny; but Kingsland stood waiting in an attitude of stolid composure, watch in hand, in no great distress of mind. At length he called crisply:

"One minute more. If you don't line up then I'll go ahead with substitutes in your places."

"Go ahead and be hanged!" shouted Martin. "We are through. We quit right here. I won't play on the scrubs, and your best players say I am dead right. They've got enough of you. They will quit with me. Now, go ahead and run your imitation foot-ball team to suit yourself."

"This is really better than I dared hope for," politely replied the coach, waving the rebels adieu. "I expected to have more trouble in getting rid of you and your partners, Martin."

The mutinous veterans stalked from the field with haughty strides, and were instantly surrounded by clamorous undergraduates who began to cheer them. Presently a disorderly parade fell in behind these shabby heroes and escorted them toward the gymnasium, Martin and Jenkins in the van. This diversion almost cleared the field of spectators, to

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the satisfaction of Kingsland, who briefly addressed the waiting players and the fringe of gaping substitutes:

"If there is anybody else here who wants to show himself a baby, now is the time to leave the squad. If you are all willing to do as you are told, earnestly and cheerfully, I will pick a new 'varsity eleven and get right down to hard practice."

Instead of grumbling, this devoted band, led by Joseph Pumpelly, exploded in a stentorian cheer which welled across field and campus like a war cry of defiant resolution:

Jim—Jim—Jim! Jame—Jame—Jame!  
Jameson—Jameson is our name!  
Kingsland—Kingsland—Kingsland!

Students came running back from all directions to discover what this new excitement portended, and a few of them flung back a ragged answering cheer, not for the deposed captain, but for Kingsland. Bless you, but it did him good to hear it! The college was not entirely against him. Some there were who knew pluck and fair play at sight. A knot of Freshmen, emboldened by this show of opinion, scurried to the side of the field and raised their voices in a lusty cheer for Joe Pumpelly, whose homely countenance was bisected by a grin of joyful pride. Kingsland was immensely gratified to know

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that his banner had gained a few recruits, and straight-way set about choosing and drilling a new team; for he had no intention of losing the afternoon's practice.

No fewer than seven Freshmen did he assign to fill the gaps in the rush line and back field, selecting the remaining quartet from among the older men who had tried for the team in previous years. Three of them belonged to other fraternities than Kappa Beta Alpha, but they were disgusted with the conduct of the mutineers, besides nursing a grievance in that they thought favoritism had been shown in setting them aside under the preceding coaching régime. The eleventh man was a bespectacled Senior, with a sadly solemn manner, who was an ardent reformer by nature. He had flatly declared his disapproval of college fraternities in general, and therefore had nothing to lose by linking himself with Kingsland's forlorn hope.

A nervous, uncertain eleven it was, with little of the steadying ballast of experience, but the coach was not for a moment dismayed. He was not hoping to win a foot-ball championship with this stout-hearted company of greenhorns; in fact, he looked forward to a succession of defeats; but at any rate he was building on a firm foundation for the right kind of success in after years, and some other coach was welcome to the laurels of the future. Even in

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this first day's test the team manifested a new spirit of concerted willingness and zeal, and battered fiercely against the weary scrubs, with no thought of saving themselves.

Having at length dismissed them with words of cordial encouragement, Kingsland was leaving the field when he noticed a carriage standing near the further end of the grandstand. The latter part of the practice had raged in the vicinity of the scrub goal posts, for which reason this vehicle had been more or less screened from the sight of the coach, who was absorbed in his task. Shading his eyes with his cap—the sun was low and bright—he was conscious of a distinct thrill of surprise at discerning Mildred Brewster in the carriage. Her companions were two men much older than she, one white-haired and shrunken, the other portly, heavy-jowled, and by no means as venerable. As Kingsland wavered in his tracks the little old gentleman beckoned him and called out:

“If you will be so kind! I have not had an opportunity of meeting you before.”

Kingsland knew the President of the college only by sight. The massive gentleman with him must be the Dean, who had been absent from the campus for some time on a mission to extract funds from the alumni. Under the direct fire of Mildred Brewster's unfriendly gaze, the coach advanced as if he

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were storming a double-shotted battery. He had never felt more wretchedly self-conscious, but President Stellwagon was oblivious to the feminine equation as he chirruped excitedly:

"Dear me, Mr. Kingsland, what is this I hear? I drove out to take the air and to watch my boys at play for a few minutes, and I learn that you have thrown the college into violent excitement by eliminating the captain and disrupting our foot-ball team. Most extraordinary proceedings! Such disorders affect the work of the class-rooms. They agitate the atmosphere of the campus. You agree with me, Dean Hemphill?"

The Dean assumed the frown which was wont to make undergraduate offenders quake in their boots, and rumbled, in a bass voice that matched his bulk:

"I most heartily agree with you, President Stellwagon. My nephew, Lawrence Martin, told me the facts in detail last evening. He is a frank, manly fellow, as you know. Mildred was in a position to confirm his statements as a result of her own observations. The foot-ball curriculum does not fall within my jurisdiction—ha, ha, Doctor!—but of course I am heartily interested in the wholesome pastimes of our boys. All work and no play—you know."

Kingsland was shifting from one foot to the other, wondering if he was to be included in this dialogue.

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These worthy gentlemen added more fuel to the fires of his indignation as the President replied, with a fond smile:

"Fine boys, all of them. Impetuous at times; young colts in academic pastures. They must be coaxed, not driven, Mr. Kingsland. Tact and discretion, my dear young man. Always temper zeal with tact and discretion. Athletics are all very well in their way, but they must never be suffered to arouse the baser passions, to breed discord or dissension. You are a clergyman—I am delighted to hear it—and you know where to find the saying that a soft answer turneth away wrath. This little misunderstanding with our tried and trusted players will blow over, I presume."

"Why, of course it will. Merely a disciplinary measure to frighten them a bit," exclaimed the Dean, with a gusty laugh.

Kingsland sighed and looked at Mildred Brewster, more than ever allured by the noble sweetness and strength of her unusual quality of beauty. If she were stubbornly wrong in her opinion of him, he was every bit as stubbornly unyielding; and as their glances locked for an instant each read an open challenge in the other's eyes. It was obvious to him that he could not easily persuade the President and the Dean that a vital principle of manliness was at stake. His battle and its issues lay wholly beyond

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their ken. So, when he answered them with patient deference, his defence was really for her ears alone.

"I am afraid that my decision of to-day is final. The whole difficulty has arisen because a college fraternity attempted to control the foot-ball team. I did not seek a quarrel. Nothing is so disastrous to an athletic organization in the training season. I am the coach, and I must have loyal obedience and discipline. I believe with all my heart that the right kind of foot-ball means character building. It is, or should be, part of the equipment for successful manhood. This is what I am trying to give to Jameson College. It is part of my ministry, if you please. I came here with hopes and prayers that I might be able to accomplish more for good, shoulder to shoulder with these young men, than I had been able to achieve in my pulpit at Mason Corners. And I am not in the least discouraged."

"Then Lawrence Martin is to submit to public disgrace, along with half a dozen others of our best athletes and most popular students?" snapped the Dean, whose choler was rising. "I have heard that you have a high and headstrong temper, Mr. Kingsland. Was not that the impression you gathered from Mr. Whittaker, Mildred? I am not at all sure that you are qualified to handle young men. I am deeply concerned over this matter. It may call for interference by the faculty."

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Mildred Brewster flushed to the temples, evidently annoyed and discomfited. She did not wish to be held up to Kingsland's scorn as a tale-bearer; this much was plain to see. He felt generous pity for her plight, and exclaimed, with a short laugh:

"Oh, I know very well what Jared Whittaker had to say. I have known him for nearly ten years. We never agreed about anything."

"Mr. Whittaker is a most estimable man and a clergyman of the highest attainments. We call him our college pastor," hastily interposed the aged President, with a soothing gesture. "The air is growing chill, and I must go in-doors, Mr. Kingsland. You came to us most highly recommended as a coach, and you are receiving an extravagant recompense. Dear me, my yearly reward as a tutor was no more than our enthusiastic young men bestow upon you for a few weeks' play. It behooves you to consider the sentiments of our college, to adjust these unfortunate differences, to make friends of our students. I hope you will call in to see me soon, with more cheerful tidings."

The Dean growled a kind of booming echo of these sentiments, Mildred Brewster nodded with averted glance, and the carriage trundled away, while the head coach gazed after and said to himself:

"So I am under the faculty ban! The Board of Trustees will be next heard from, at this rate."



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However, I scored one point, and it was worth all the scolding from the Dean and the President. *She* was ashamed of herself, and she showed it. She knew that she had not fought fair in retailing Jared Whittaker's trashy stories about me. A blind man could see that he is in love with her."

Gentle old President Stellwagon had sown his seed in stony ground. Instead of trying to "adjust the unfortunate differences," Kingsland hurried to the gymnasium for the purpose of re-enforcing his position. His players were still in the dressing-room, and as soon as they had finished shifting into street clothes he called them into an office adjoining, locked the door, and announced:

"The 'varsity team and substitutes will now elect a new captain. There is no need of a long-winded speech on my part. What the college is going to say about this election I do not know, nor do I care. If any one of you fellows feels that he ought not to risk unpopularity among his friends, now is the time for him to withdraw, and the rest of us will think no less of him for it."

The spectacled Senior, as the eldest of the group, advanced to the front and declaimed, with a manner that did credit to his courses in elocution:

"We who are about to die salute you. Far be it from me to be considered fresh; but, by the holy poker, Mr. Kingsland, I want you to know that you

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are the best thing that ever happened to Jameson, and it makes no difference to us if we get whipped in every game of the season. Principle before party, say I! The college first, and the fraternities nowhere!"

The Continental Congress, resolving to defy the might of England, could have deliberated with no more gravity and realization of its incalculable risks and responsibilities than was manifested by these undergraduates, who elected to incur the hostility of the campus whose horizon bounded their whole world. In this moment they were more genuinely heroic than ever they could be in the stress of the most desperate foot-ball contest. In silence they wrote their ballots and handed them to the coach, who smiled as he read and tallied them.

"Joseph Pumpelly is your choice, gentlemen," he said at length. "His election is almost unanimous. I most heartily approve. Shake hands, Pumpelly. I imagine you are the first Freshman captain that Jameson ever had, but don't let that rattle you."

"I—I guess I am," stammered Pumpelly, quite overcome by the honor, and gulping as if he were about to blubber. "Gee-whiz, what will dad say to this?"

"What the dickens will the college say?" exclaimed another Freshman, who was trying to look

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brave. "They'll hang Joe's hide on a fence for this day's work."

"It has been a good day's work," said Kingsland. "Keep your courage, all of you. Don't lose any sleep over what the college is going to do. Our business is to play foot-ball for all we are worth."

## CHAPTER IX

### JOSH YATES TO THE RESCUE

FOR almost a week the eleven, led by Joseph Pumpelly, practised without molestation. The campus was outwardly indifferent and ominously calm. Kingsland felt certain that trouble was brewing, but he knew not how to guard against it. Almost the only spectators at the field were Freshmen, amazed at their own audacity, who gathered to cheer in timorous accents their rawboned Napoleon of a classmate who had won such very perilous eminence. There followed a game with another college team, played on the latter's grounds in a near-by corner of Maine, in which Jameson was defeated by a small score. Kingsland saw that his men were fast finding themselves and was not cast down. Shortly after this there followed a contest on the Jameson field, and again disaster befell, though by a margin still narrower. No more than a handful of students were present. Pumpelly's team was boycotted, and the coach was being given sufficient rope with which to hang himself. The manager, Hanscom, made futile protest, as follows:

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"The foot-ball association is going bankrupt, Mr. Kingsland. Your team doesn't draw the crowds. We are taking in almost no admission money. The training table ought to be started by this time, but we can't afford it. The team is supposed to have new uniforms and sweaters. The fiasco is up to you, but as manager I am held responsible for the finances. What do you expect me to do about it? The college has let you have your way. Lawrence Martin has behaved like a trump and has kicked up no fuss at all."

Kingsland itched to get his hands on young Jerry Hanscom and give him the drubbing he deserved, but he was making a heroic effort to practise "tact and discretion," and replied, with sledge-hammer emphasis:

"This team will get along without a training table and will wear its old uniforms through the season, thank you. As for the college staying away from the games, you are one of the leaders of the plot to boycott the team and stab it in the back. You are the same kind of a trump as your friend Martin. You want the team to lose games, so you can swing opinion against me and gain a big enough following to throw me overboard, and then try to find another coach in time for the Willoughby game. You are hatching some kind of a scheme among you, and this calm before the storm has not deceived me for a

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moment. I haven't much time to waste on you, Hanscom."

"Huh," said the manager, looking extremely foolish, and, unable to think of a more convincing retort than this, he retreated in disorder.

Later in the day placards were displayed where the students congregated. They read in this wise:

### MASS-MEETING TO-NIGHT

IN

ALUMNI HALL AT 7.30

Every One Interested in the Foot-ball Situation is Expected to Attend Without Fail

Addresses by

Captain Martin, Manager Hanscom, Professor Snell, Coach Kingsland, and Others.

### COME AND SHOW YOUR COLLEGE SPIRIT

"This is the first warning I have had," said Kingsland to himself, as he halted to read the document. "Captain Martin, eh? Where does Captain Pumpy come in? I wish I wasn't such a poor stick at making a speech. This is my great chance to state my case, but I am sure to make a fiasco of it. Well, it is war in the open from now on. This is what they have been cooking up for the last fortnight."

His sense of humor came to the rescue; for there, standing not ten feet away, with countenance even

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more lugubrious than his own, was Joseph Pumpelly, whom this proclamation ignored as captain of the Jameson eleven. With mutual impulse they moved toward each other, and the Freshman confided, in a subterranean whisper:

"Here is where they throw the harpoon into us up to the hilt and twist it three times for luck. I'm going to hot-foot it among my class and tell them what it means. They will be at the meeting in a bunch; I'll see to that; and they will be with you and me to the finish. There are almost a hundred Freshmen in college, and they won't see us turned down without putting up the darndest howl you ever heard in your life."

"I think the college will not condemn us without a hearing," said Kingsland soberly. "All we ask is a fair chance."

"And we are going to get it," stoutly declared Pumpelly, the undaunted; with which he marched off to cook his dinner on the smoky stove in that attic room of his.

Feeling in sore need of trustworthy counsel, the coach set out in search of Professor Arthur Holt, but that mercurial ally was nowhere to be found. Kingsland had never felt himself to be so detached and isolated from the life that eddied around him. Hitherto he had made and kept friends without effort of his own. In years he was somewhat older

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than these undergraduates, but in spirit he was still one of them, craving their sympathy, loyalty, and respect. With forebodings of which he could not rid himself, he awaited the ordeal of the mass-meeting which had been contrived for his undoing.

The darkness of a cloudy autumn evening had fallen upon the campus when a huge touring car clanked and snorted up the hill hard by, and moved like a fiery dragon along the road that skirted the college buildings and led through the town of Spindle Falls. Presently the chauffeur checked his machine to a snail's pace, for the highway was almost blocked by a swarming crowd of young men who were buzzing like so many excited bees in front of the lighted doors of a squat stone building. The solitary passenger, a person of great height and bulk in his ample fur coat, squinted through the gloom at the noisy assemblage, and exclaimed:

"Henri, what the deuce have we run into now? They are not going to get out of the way, and by the row they are raising I should take them to be a mob of college pups. This looks like a campus to me. But we are trying to get on the trail of a hotel. Wait here until I get my bearings."

Hailing the nearest group of youths the motor pilgrim asked:

"What is this, and where is Spindle Falls, if you please?"



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"This is Jameson College, and the town is straight ahead," cried a student.

"Jameson College!" exclaimed the towering stranger. "Why, confound it all, education is being overdone. A man can't wander over a strange road after dark without running over a college or two. What's all the excitement?"

"A foot-ball mass-meeting," politely answered the other. "The college is all in a stew over the coach we got from Yale. We can't stand for him any longer. Our team is all to the bad."

The imposing one strode forward, pushed his leather cap to the back of his head, and stared down at his informant with the liveliest interest.

"A coach from Yale, and a mass-meeting to turn him down!" roared he. "Why, this is right where I belong. I used to play on the Yale eleven myself. What is the name of this unfortunate gentleman who is not good enough for Jameson College?"

"Kingsland," faltered the student, retreating before this formidable outcry.

"Deacon' Kingsland? Stocky man with a blue eye and a bull-terrier jaw? A parson somewhere up in this neck of the woods?"

"He preaches at a village called Mason Corners," tremulously vouchsafed the youth, who expected to be eaten alive.

"Of course it is good old 'Deacon' Kingsland,

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“bless his immortal soul!” thundered the impetuous unknown; with which he hastened back to his car and exclaimed:

“Henri, push along to the hotel, put up the car, and trot back here with a bag of sandwiches and any other provender you can loot. I shall eat supper at the mass-meeting.”

A score or more of students had pressed toward this new centre of interest. There was something startling in the sudden appearance of this impressive stranger and his enormous touring car. His resonant eulogy of Kingsland had carried far. He was, indeed, like unto a veritable god from the machine, dropped out of the darkness. Addressing the curious group, he declaimed, with an incredulous laugh:

“So you are going to stand ‘Deacon’ Kingsland on his head this very blessed evening! So glad I happened along for the obsequies. Well, well, I was going to push my car thirty miles over your infernal roads to Mason Corners to-morrow, just for the fun of shaking hands with him. I shall have to insist upon having a front seat at this funeral you are fixing up for him. Nobody ever downed him before. It will be a great experience.”

A slim, active young man quickly detached himself from the indistinguishable mass on the sidewalk, and caught the stranger by the arm with the cordial greeting:

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"I am tremendously glad to meet a friend of Mr. Kingsland! Won't you let me take you in charge and find you a seat in the hall? My name is Arthur Holt, of the college faculty."

"Delighted, I'm sure," was the instant response. "My name is Yates—Joshua Yates—of 'Deacon' Kingsland's class in Yale. I have been trying out my new car by running her up to Rangeley to visit the camp of a couple of old pals of mine. Was in the East on business. And, by Jupiter, you bet I wasn't going to pass through New England without running Kingsland to earth. I gathered from the peevish disposition of the assemblage that some kind of a foot-ball tempest in a teapot is on the programme for this evening. Kindly lead me to it; for, with all respect to Jameson College, the idea of reading the riot act to 'Deacon' Kingsland strikes me as rather humorous."

Josh Yates had not lowered his voice, and the students within earshot were pricked with curiosity. Arthur Holt was chuckling as he led this unexpected advocate into the crowded hall and forced a passage down the middle aisle. There were only two empty chairs near the platform, and Yates, taking his escort in tow, made for them without ceremony. Holt was more amused than ever to discover that the chairs just beyond them were occupied by Mildred Brewster, Dean Hemphill, and Jared Whittaker.

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Courtesy demanded that he present Mr. Joshua Yates, who made admiring obeisance to the beautiful young woman, shook hands with the Dean, and exclaimed at sight of Whittaker:

"Hello! Upon my word, is this a class reunion? Where did you blow in from, Jared? Good for you! Bobbed up to blow 'Deacon' Kingsland's horn for him? That's the proper spirit."

Whittaker wriggled and his airy self-possession forsook him. He had no intention of rushing to Kingsland's defence, but he did not wish to have Yates call him a traitor; wherefore he replied with a sickly smile:

"Of course I am interested in the college foot-ball situation. I am pastor of a church here. Glad to see you, Yates."

"That is just bully," cried Yates, his handsome face beaming with good-natured surprise. "Oh, I remember that you turned parson. I hope you are doing well. Then you are in a position to get up and make a rattling speech, if Kingsland needs any friends. He used to be an awful duffer at speechifying, while you had a wonderful gift of gab in the class debates, as I remember it."

The embarrassment of Whittaker was positively feverish. If the figure of speech were not disrespectful to Mildred Brewster, it might aptly be said that he was caught between the devil and the deep

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sea. Self-interest, ambition, and the overweening desire to find favor in her sight had led him to go with the majority. And now this big, blustering, masterful Josh Yates had appeared to accuse and confound him. Stealing a glance at Mildred, whose face glowed with puzzled interest, Whittaker was about to stammer some sort of a miserable evasion, when the Dean saved him by pompously observing:

"Mr. Yates is a stranger to Jameson. I shall be pleased to enlighten him. Even though he is an old friend of Mr. Kingsland, he is fair-minded enough to welcome the facts in the case, I am sure. In the first place, there has been a high-handed assumption of authority and an inclination to dictate to the college which——"

"Oh, my dear sir, you can tell me nothing new about 'Deacon' Kingsland," said Yates, cutting him short, for already he disliked the Dean. "I played foot-ball against him, don't you know. I can't believe he has changed very much in the last five years. Really, I prefer to hear him speak for himself."

Yates turned about to face Mildred Brewster, who sat next to him, and asked, as if he were not in the least afraid of her:

"Are you interested in the athletics of the college? Have you had the pleasure of meeting George Kingsland?"

## JOSH YATES TO THE RESCUE

She was not wholly at ease. This breezy, outspoken personage was not to be put in his place by a word or a frown, nor did he stand in the slightest awe of her displeasure. For so long had she queened it in her campus realm that her emotions were disquieting as she answered non-committally:

"Yes, I am very much interested in our foot-ball season, and I have met Mr. Kingsland."

"You don't have to know him very well to realize what a solid old rock of a man he is," cried Josh Yates, tugging at his blond mustache and gazing at her with a quizzical smile. "Nothing showy, but all there. By Jove, Miss Brewster, he is a man in a million!"

She bit her lip and looked aside, while Yates stared at her profile with the most ingenuous admiration, and murmured aloud: "Stunning! Right off a Greek vase."

"I beg your pardon, Mr. Yates?" said she, with startled hauteur.

"Oh, nothing at all, Miss Brewster. I was admiring the classic frieze above the gallery. What you might call high art. Bad joke, that."

Arthur Holt, who had been enjoying himself as a listener, nudged him and whispered:

"There is Kingsland—over by the stage door. He just now came in. He looks pale and rattled."

Instantly Yates excused himself and made a bee-

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line for his old Yale comrade, whom he violently pounded on the back and then grasped with both hands, while he exclaimed:

“‘Deacon,’ you dear old fool, what ails you? I never saw you look as jumpy as this, except the night you were due to make that speech in Dwight Hall. Whew, but I am glad to see you!”

Kingsland was so taken aback that he could only stammer, while his lip quivered:

“Old friends are best, Josh. Where did you drop from? I am not so popular as when we last met, old man. Whom are you with?”

“A fine chap named Holt took me under his wing. He planted me alongside a peach of a girl, who doesn’t seem to like me, and a large, stuffy old party tagged as the Dean of the college, and that greasy grind of ours, Jared Whittaker! They don’t seem to warm up at mention of your name. It is a frappéd little company, but I expect to thaw them.”

“I must go over and sit with the Freshmen, my right-hand supporters,” said Kingsland. “Better go back to your seat, Josh, and look out for squalls. I’ll join you later. S-s-s-sh! The meeting has been called to order.”

Reluctantly Yates tiptoed to his chair and sat intently listening while young Professor Snell, as presiding officer, nervously delivered himself of the following:

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"As you are aware, gentlemen of the college, the purpose of this mass-meeting is to discuss, freely and fully, the unsatisfactory condition of the present foot-ball season. Unfortunately, the college has refused to ratify the actions and policy of our head coach, a situation without precedent in our athletic history. In order that Mr. Kingsland may have no grounds for thinking he is unfairly dealt with, or in any way misjudged or misunderstood, he has been invited to present his views to-night. Captain Martin and Manager Hanscom will tell you their versions of the troubles which have disorganized the eleven and antagonized a great number of the students at large. Following the speeches, it will be in order for the college to express its wishes by the formal procedure of motion or resolution. I shall first call on Mr. Kingsland, the coach."

There were hisses from the rear of the hall, at the sound of which Josh Yates leaped to his feet as if he had been shot at, and turned to face the scene of disturbance. It was incredible that these young idiots were hissing the name of George Kingsland. So fiercely rebuking and undaunted was the mien of this tall, broad-shouldered stranger that the ill-mannered undergraduates became silent.

Kingsland took the stage with an awkward, diffident manner, wholly unlike his demeanor on field or campus. He was in the grip of the old stage fright



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which had seldom troubled him during his pastorate at Mason Corners. Instinctively his hands went into his pockets as he stood waiting for silence. The hostile atmosphere oppressed him. He was overanxious, tense, and his thoughts were all awlirl as he cleared his throat, made a false start or two, and then began to speak in this limping fashion:

“I have done nothing to explain or apologize for—that is—you want to put me in a hole to-night—and this meeting has been packed for that very purpose. I have tried to do what I thought was right—and to build up a winning foot-ball system. But as long as you disown the captain and the 'varsity team that I have chosen to represent Jameson, my talking to you is only a waste of words. I have tried to show you that loyalty and unselfishness and duty must be learned on the foot-ball field. But the men whom you have indorsed for the team behaved like sulky, spoiled children, and I punished them for it. That is all there is to it. This is not a meeting for fair discussion. It is a weapon to be used against me, and it was engineered by Martin and his fraternity crowd to serve their own ends. My position is so very painful—it cuts me so to the heart to be thought so meanly of—that—that—if I did not think it cowardly I should quit this place to-night. I have more to tell you, but——”

Mopping his face, he hesitated for the right word.

## JOSH YATES TO THE RESCUE

A hot-headed youth in the gallery sang out at the top of his voice:

"Oh, rats! Cut it short and go back to Mason Corners, why don't you?"

Others of this heedless crowd caught the cue and raised a chorus of taunts and jeers. Kingsland stood facing them, white and speechless, but Josh Yates was clearing decks for action. Lunging into the aisle, he thrust the students to one side and the other, vaulted to the platform, and dragged Kingsland aside with the emphatic injunction:

"Get out of this, 'Deacon.' Here is where I do a turn. I'll tell them a few things, and be glad of the chance."

With a grateful, tremulous smile, the coach returned to his seat beside Joseph Pumpelly, while Josh Yates glowered at the audience. His invasion of the platform was so spectacular that curiosity compelled attention. His physique was commanding; his bearing and attire marked the man of wealth, power, and assured station; and his swaggering assurance was not to be cried down by any mob of callow youths. The noisy hall became hushed in a twinkling. Without hesitation or apology, this amazing stranger began to talk in easy, conversational tones:

"I am an intruder and an outsider. My name is Yates, and I played guard on the Yale eleven six

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years ago. The kind of foot-ball we played then may be out of date under your new rules, but the doctrine of fair play they hammered into us on the Yale field can never be outlawed. I want to see fair play for my old friend and classmate George Kingsland. This is why I took his place here. He is too modest to talk about himself. I am not built that way. Talking is my long suit. Let me tell you a little foot-ball story. Kingsland played on the Yale second eleven, or scrub, for three seasons, or almost that long. The coaches thought he was too light to put in at centre rush, and toward the end of that third season of his I was lucky enough to beat him out for that position, just as other men had taken it away from him in other years. I was forty pounds heavier. I was made centre rush because of my beef and height. Kingsland never whimpered, although he was a better player than I in every way. He just went on as he had always done, captaining the scrubs and putting his spirit into them until they were good enough to keep the 'varsity guessing every minute. He was helping the college in this way, do you understand? This was what he thought he was there for.

"Now, I hated foot-ball and was afraid of it, and Kingsland knew it. I had been coddled along as a boy and had a timid streak that I could not seem to get rid of. The coaches had not found it out, but

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just before the Princeton game I lost my nerve. I was afraid to go into that game. I was sure I was going to show the white feather and disgrace myself for life. The night before the contest a cablegram intended for me was delivered to Kingsland by mistake. He had a room next to mine, and I heard him threshing the thing out with himself. He thought the message might contain bad news—it was in code, you understand—and he knew that if my nerves got about one more good shock I would be too badly broken up to go into the game. And, of course, he would be sent in at centre rush. And he had worked for it three straight years.

“What did he do? He carried the message down stairs to the coaches, expecting them to hold it from me until after the game. He forfeited what he believed to be his great opportunity because he put duty and loyalty first. But this was not at all surprising. George Kingsland was that kind, and every man in college looked up to him as a leader for good. Well, when I realized what he had done in the case of this cable message, had fully grasped the significance of it, I was ashamed of myself beyond words. It was a kind of moral crisis, a turning point for me. The big things of life sometimes swing on mighty small pivots, you know.

“The yellow streak had been wiped clean out of me by another man’s example. I was no faint-

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hearted centre rush next day, if I do say it myself. I felt that I was fighting for Kingsland as well as for myself and for the college. Early in the Harvard game a week later I was hurt, and Kingsland took my place. Then he was elected captain and had rotten material from which to build his eleven next year. But he turned out a championship team because he taught it how to fight in the last ditch and to think only of the college, not of its own hurts and discouragements.

"I was very grateful to this splendid classmate of mine, and I admired him tremendously. I offered him a business career that meant wealth and power and influence in a few years. He would not listen to me. He had decided to become a clergyman because he wished to serve humanity. Then I offered to build him a costly church in a town I own in Colorado and give him a decent income. He turned me down flat, and came up here to take a little bit of a poverty-stricken parish at Mason Corners. I tell you it did my heart good to run across him so unexpectedly here to-night. Jameson College is to be congratulated for having persuaded him to coach her foot-ball team. It is a privilege to have him in any community. And five hundred good Yale men, who have been out in the world long enough to know the real things from the counterfeit, would indorse every word I say if they could be pres-

## JOSH YATES TO THE RESCUE

ent at this mass-meeting. My advice is not wanted; but if you know your business you will settle your squabbles among yourselves and leave your football team in the hands of a man who knows what he is doing first, last, and all the time. I broke into this proposition because George Kingsland was not getting a square deal. Now, gentlemen, I will permit the show to go on."

Having finished his insolent harangue, which was most resonantly delivered, Joshua Yates strode grandly from the platform. The Freshmen, led by Pumpelly, who wildly waved his arms, erupted in a lusty cheer, and scattering hurrahs rose from other quarters of the hall. A little more and the undismayed Yates might have stampeded the mass-meeting. The opposition was more or less disorganized by this flank attack, and Professor Snell glanced imploringly at Martin and Hanscom.

The deposed captain came to the front with a most unwilling air and tried to make himself heard; but the Freshmen refused to be subdued and roared that their own Pumpelly was the real captain and no usurper could speak in his stead.

Josh Yates had rejoined his party in high spirits. Expecting to be congratulated for his service in the cause of friendship, he was surprised to observe that the Dean was red with wrath and Jared Whittaker as glum as the proverbial oyster. Of the trio, Mil-

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dred Brewster alone gave this hero the welcome he deserved. Her eyes were unwontedly bright and her smile was warm and cordial as she said in a low voice:

"I am one of the enemy, Mr. Yates; but you did a fine thing for a friend, and I cannot help admiring it."

"Don't admire me. I am most unworthy," returned the blond giant of a Yates. "If you have any admiration to spare, give it to the man I talked about. I have an idea that you haven't been very nice to him."

Before she could fence with the truthful surmise, Dean Hemphill, who looked as if he were about to explode with a prodigious bang, upheaved himself and, aiming a truculent finger at Yates, angrily declaimed:

"What right have you to intrude yourself in the affairs of Jameson College, young man? Your conduct has been most offensive and impertinent, sir. And you, Mr. Holt, are responsible for bringing this person to the mass-meeting. I shall expect you at my office to-morrow morning to explain your part in this conspiracy. The disorder must cease at once. I am going to adjourn this meeting."

The Dean made for the platform, while Josh Yates whispered to Jared Whittaker:

"Hustle up there and head him off with a speech of your own. The boys will listen to you because

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you belong here. Give it to them straight about 'Deacon' Kingsland. You know him like a book. This is the psychological moment. Get to it, and side-track the Dean."

Alas, Whittaker was cornered, but he sparred for time by making one half-hearted excuse after another, and the Dean, who moved rapidly for a man of his girth, was soon ready to unlimber his heavy artillery.

"Students, attention!" he thundered from the edge of the platform. "There is no prospect of carrying out the original programme of this meeting. Owing to unexpected interference, the Freshmen class is behaving in a lawless manner, and I must request you to disperse at once. I recommend that a special committee of the student and faculty bodies be appointed within the next week to take action concerning the foot-ball coaching system."

There were riotous cheers for the Dean, and the volatile mob poured pell-mell out of the front doors, to discuss at leisure the singular episode of the presumptuous stranger in the big motor car. Yates carefully avoided the Dean, who lingered to talk with Professor Snell, while Arthur Holt dallied in the hope of walking homeward with Mildred Brewster. As for Jared Whittaker, he vanished with the least possible commotion, as if circumstances had played him a scurvy trick. Josh Yates promptly



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bore down upon Kingsland, and, despite his prayers to be let alone, dragged him triumphantly across the hall and presented him to Mildred Brewster with the air of one who had made an important capture.

"Miss Brewster confesses that she admires me for sticking up for you," cried the terrible Yates. "Thank her prettily, 'Deacon.' She mustn't judge you by the speech you fozzled to-night. Give me time and I'll convince her that your heart is in the right place."

Kingsland was the picture of floundering confusion. There must be a mistake. Yates was going entirely too far as a crusader. Expecting to hear her deny it, Kingsland ventured to ask:

"Did you really say that?"

"I plead guilty," she replied, with a smile that quite bowled him over, the first smile she had ever granted him. "I am true to my college colors, Mr. Kingsland, and loyal to my adopted fraternity. Therefore you and I are still at war. But I am sure that the things which Mr. Yates said about you are true, for his manner was most convincing. And I think you ought to be proud of such a record and proud of such a friend as he. This is more than I said to him just now."

"It is far more than I expected to hear," gravely replied Kingsland. "I had not hoped that you would even declare a truce."

## JOSH YATES TO THE RESCUE

"Let us call it a truce, if you like," was her gracious answer, as she offered her hand in farewell.

Kingsland stood gazing after her until Josh Yates smote him in the ribs and cried:

"Wake up! All out for Spindle Falls! Come down to the hotel and let us dig up something to eat. My driver was ordered to fetch emergency rations to the mass-meeting, but he must have turned up when I was holding the centre of the stage. Oh my, oh my, how hungry and how dry I am!"

They strolled away, arm in arm, into the starry darkness of the campus, while Yates revolved in his active mind all manner of thoughts, and Kingsland said never a word. At length the former broke the silence with the natural query:

"Before we go to bed I want to hear all the details of this foot-ball ruction. Are you really up against it hard?"

"Not as hard as I thought," dreamily returned the coach. "Miss Brewster declared a truce—actually, she did, Josh."

"Oh, you sentimental old ass!" exclaimed Josh, in high dudgeon. "Who said anything about the girl? I thought you were petticoat-proof. I want to know about foot-ball, understand?"

"She treated me abominably, and it is you who changed her opinion, old man," was the absent yet

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fervent reply. "I am more grateful than I can tell you."

"Oh, shucks, 'Deacon'! I didn't prance up on that stage and make a show of myself to win you a smile from the haughty damosel. But I see my finish. I camp right here at the college until the season ends. You don't need a friend half so much as you need a keeper. And I seem to be elected to fill the bill by special act of Providence."

## CHAPTER X

### THE GIRL WHO DARED

THE two old friends foregathered at breakfast in the hotel next morning, and Kingsland had become sane enough overnight to discuss foot-ball at length. Mr. Joshua Yates heartily reiterated his intention of remaining in Spindle Falls until the clouds should have cleared, declaring that he had hugely enjoyed the mass-meeting and yearned for more excitement. After Kingsland had outlined the college rebellion in all its details, Yates sagely shook his head and observed critically:

"You have been dead right from the start, 'Deacon.' But you have no more tact than a porcupine, and never did have. You are a most admirably pig-headed person, and seem to enjoy charging straight at trouble with your eyes shut instead of trying to find an easier way around it. These college boys are at the fool age. Great Heavens, man, remember how many kinds of an ass I was in those days! Think of my foot-ball career and the horrible duffer I was when I was on our team. You forgave me

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for that. Is there no way to jolly the little crowd of soreheads who are at the bottom of all this trouble? You are mistaken if you think the college stands behind them. Let my talents shine to help you on your stormy way. Appoint me your assistant coach and diplomat extraordinary, why don't you?"

Kingsland's stubbornly honest countenance lighted with gratitude, but he was not ready to capitulate. "You are too easy-going and good-natured, Josh," said he. "I can win out on my own lines. You broke the backbone of the insurrection last night with your splendidly foolish speech. Make yourself as popular as you like, but don't give an inch in my behalf. Give my foot-ball team a chance to make good. And don't let Martin and Hanscom fool you. They are the genuine bad eggs of the outfit."

"Oh, I shall not waste my sweetness on those young rascals," airily returned the other. "They are fouling their own nest. I shall invite myself to get acquainted with their dear brothers of Kappa Beta Alpha, and try to show them that they can't afford to let a brace of donkeys give the whole society a bad name. First, however, I shall drop in to see the heavyweight Dean. He was quite fretty last evening. He needs fresh air, and a swift spin in my car will do him lots of good. Henri thinks no day well spent unless he has fractured a few speed laws of the rural countryside."

## THE GIRL WHO DARED

"If you bag the Dean I shall consider you a wizard of the first order," laughed Kingsland. "Do you really want to help me with the practice this afternoon?"

"Sure thing. Find me some foot-ball togs, and I'll coach the centre men while you look after the ends and backs. I am shy of training, and shall probably flop over and expire in my tracks after five minutes of play, but it is up to me to perish in this most worthy cause. This Pumpelly lad of yours must be a corker. I want to meet him. Do you mean to tell me he is playing foot-ball on the kind of grub he cooks himself?"

"He is not the only one," answered the coach. "Several of my men have to get along in the same way. This little college is full of young Spartan heroes. Too bad we can't have a training table. No money in the treasury. Hanscom, the manager, doesn't want us to have any money."

"Well, by the jumping Jupiter!" cried Yates, thumping the table. "The Jameson College eleven is going to have its little tummies filled, and don't you forget it, 'Deacon.' I will arrange matters with the landlord of this tavern at once. Tell your hungry heroes to report here for supper to-night and three times per day thereafter. Hang the college athletic treasury! Why, I shall get my money back in watching them tuck away the fodder. No steaks

## THE HEAD COACH

and chops and mashed potatoes ever tasted so good as those you and I used to demolish at training table, 'Deacon.' Man alive, one could eat a whole plate of toast just as an appetizer--hot and crisp and buttered. Wow, but we were a pack of lusty wolves! All I ask is to let me sit at one end of the table with you at the other."

"But can you afford it? You are too generous and too loyal to me," said Kingsland, and his voice was anxious.

"Afford it? Of course I can. I have oodles of money--that I didn't earn. Setting up a training table in a country hotel isn't going to bankrupt Joshua. How about 'varsity sweaters with a big "J" on them? Isn't Hanscom going to furnish them? Half the glory of making the team is winning your sweater with the resplendent initial."

"No, I told him we could do without them."

"Order them from Boston this afternoon!" thundered Josh. "Any other small favors I can do for you? No trouble to curry a short horse. How about putting in a few kind words with the brown-eyed goddess who seems to have you up in the air, 'Deacon'? My troth is plighted to a girl in Denver--we are to be married in June, and we'll be sure to look you up when we come East. I am proof against enchantment. Shall I ask Miss Brewster out in my car and sing your praises in my simple, artless way?"

## THE GIRL WHO DARED

"My goodness, no, Josh," gasped Kingsland. "Keep your hands off. The Dean is her uncle and the Martin boy is her cousin. It is impossible that she can ever have very much use for me. Don't bungle matters, will you?"

"Why not let me try to win the whole family?" asked Josh. "I might offer to give 'em a college library or two, if I have to resort to practical politics. I never do things by halves, 'Deacon.' And for a ferocious devil of a foot-ball player who has the sand to defy a college, you are the most chicken-hearted, wobbly imitation of a suitor I ever clapped eyes on. Let me talk to the girl."

"Don't, Josh. This is no joke," pleaded Kingsland. "I am making a little headway on my own account. Give me your word to steer clear."

"All right, little Faint-heart. But I intend to have words with Jared Whittaker. He is your rival, and the villain of the piece, all right. I sized Jared up as a pretty bad actor last night. He wasn't at all enthusiastic about drawing cards in your game. That kind of strategy isn't going to please the girl when she finds him out. As a dear classmate, Whittaker is a failure. He aims to land on the winning side."

"The college runs his church," explained Kingsland. "Poor Whittaker! He has charted his course by false lights. The kind of success he lives on isn't very substantial. Popularity is his god."



## THE HEAD COACH

"Oh, he is not worth bothering about except for the fun of teasing him," was the careless reply. "I am off to beard the Dean in his den. Meet me here after your morning signal practice."

Kingsland assented and returned to his room to reflect upon the amazing shift in the tide of his fortunes. His foot-ball team was assured of financial support and he could afford to be independent of the manager and his disgruntled following. If ever there was a friend in the nick of time it was harum-scarum Joshua Yates, with a big heart, a long purse, and the energy of a runaway locomotive. It was with a crestfallen air, however, that this benevolent director of destinies reappeared after his embassy to the office of the Dean. Flinging hat and coat at Kingsland, he declared disgustedly:

"At last I have met a man as pig-headed as you are, 'Deacon.' The evil-tempered old lobster refused to talk to me and slammed the door in my face. I attempted to pass a few blandishments through the key-hole, but he huffed and he puffed and told me to go away. By George, I am tempted to make a cash offer for the college, lock, stock, and barrel, for the pleasure of throwing the Dean out on his wooden head. Ha, I forgot! He is *her* uncle. I will spare him for your sake, 'Deacon.' What now? Shall I interview the President? He missed

## THE GIRL WHO DARED

my oration last night. I can say it all over to him in private audience."

"No, let the old gentleman alone. You would scare him to death. Come along with me and look the college over."

Yates protested against wasting time in which he might be crusading; but Kingsland was obdurate, and they proceeded to make a pacific tour of the campus and the town. In the afternoon Josh Yates played a terrifying game as guard on the second eleven, and was delighted to find that he was fairly sound of wind and limb. He pitted himself against that slashing Hercules of a Freshman, Joseph Pumpelly; and these two waged combat like unto two doughty knights of old, hammering each other in all courtesy and friendliness but with the greatest possible ardor. At length the elder made signals of distress, and retired from the fray to coach the rush line, confessing to Kingsland without shame:

"Whew! that Pumpelly of yours has not suffered for lack of a training table. I feel very aged and forlorn as to my insides. I am not as fit as I used to be, 'Deacon.' Too many cigars. Say, this team of yours is not to be jeered at. They are ready to break their necks, every one of them; and between us we are going to have them working together in two or three weeks."

## THE HEAD COACH

"The training table will do a good deal for them," said Kingsland, beaming with pleasure at this indorsement of his despised youngsters. "Feed them high and they will be hard to stop."

That night the chosen players met at a long table in the dining-room of the hotel and made a whirlwind attack on a supper, the plans and specifications of which had been furnished by Josh Yates. And, more than this, the training table welded them together in a social way as comrades set apart from the rest of the college. Josh Yates told them stories of his prowess as a trencherman, when he had been one of their kind, and his booming laughter was worth going far to hear. He was a sort of patron saint in the eyes of the youths, who chuckled at his sallies and gained courage to tell him stories of their own life at Jameson.

Kingsland said little, but his honest eyes shone with pride, affection, and gratitude.

After supper Yates said to him:

"I think I will drop around to call on Jared Whitaker. He ought to look me up, by rights, but I fancy he doesn't intend to. I am curious to investigate the workings of his mental machinery, 'Deacon.'"

"Do as you like, Josh. I don't care about going with you. And I have something else on hand. One of my substitutes, Dick Smathers, is under the

## THE GIRL WHO DARED

weather. I am afraid it may be typhoid. He lives at home, on a farm about two miles down the river road, and walks to college. I sent word by one of his classmates that I would be down to see him tonight. He is a fine boy, and I am worried about him."

"Why not let Henri run you down in the car?" asked Josh. "He is eating his head off in idleness. No trouble at all. Did you think of walking all that distance in the dark?"

"The road is not fit for an automobile. I had better not risk it. And I don't mind the walk. In fact, I shall enjoy it. You will find me back in my room by nine o'clock."

Josh berated him for choosing to go on foot when he might ride in luxury, and set off to find Jared Whittaker. The fates were kind to this rising young clergyman, however, for a servant in charge of his bachelor lodgings, in the fashionable quarter of Spindle Falls, informed the caller that he had gone out of town for the evening to address a convention of the Sons of Temperance.

"Eloquence always on tap," murmured Josh, as he delayed to light a fat black cigar in the shelter of the vestibule. "If 'Deacon' Kingsland would walk four miles to cheer up a sick foot-ball player, Jared would walk ten to hand out flowers of rhetoric and fancy oratory. Which is why he surprised me by

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balking in the college mass-meeting. Oh, well, there is no hurry. I'll get him yet, and when I do his speech will be mostly apology. The night is still young. If there is a theatre in this dismal town, and a show worth seeing, why not charter a box and round up Pumpelly and his friends? Those Freshmen are a solid comfort."

There proved to be a theatre and no less an attraction than "East Lynne." The critical philanthropist flinched at sight of the bill-boards, but, reflecting that the average Freshman could find joy in a "show" of any kind, he invested recklessly and then started off to gather in his guests. Ere long he lost his bearings, and, turning into the wrong street, fetched up in sight of his hotel, whereas he had intended to steer for the domicile of Joseph Pumpelly. Disgusted with the confusing topography of Spindle Falls, he was for taking no more chances, and asked the landlord to find him a cab. The night was mild and genial for autumn, and Yates sat himself down in an arm-chair on the porch and blandly surveyed the passers-by, feeling very much at peace with himself and with the world at large, barring Jared Whittaker and the obstinate Dean of Jameson College.

Presently he muttered an ejaculation of intense surprise and his tilted chair came down with a thump. An instant later he scrambled to his feet,

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flung away his cigar, and ran down the steps to the pavement. A tall and graceful young woman had emerged from the gloom of the other side of the street, walking straight toward him with hasty step. The collar of her long gray coat was upturned, and her face was partly hidden by a white scarf or filmy shawl, for she wore no hat. Her manner bespoke agitated reluctance, as if her sensibilities were greatly shocked by whatever it was that she felt herself impelled to do. Before she had spoken, Yates knew that Mildred Brewster was seeking him, and upon some tragic errand. He advanced to meet her as soon as her gesture of recognition confirmed his surmise.

"Do you want me?" he asked in low tones, his first impulse being to shield her from the curious gaze of the idlers in the hotel doorway.

"Yes, Mr. Yates. I have something to tell you, quick. Can't we go away from here?" She no more than breathed the words from parted lips. All the lovely color had fled her cheek, and her dark eyes were lustrous with a singular intensity of excitement.

Asking no questions, Yates offered her his arm, and they walked rapidly from the public place in which they had met to the darkness and seclusion of a small street hard by, where there was almost no traffic at this hour. Her companion's composure,

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the unspoken chivalry of his instant response to her urgent summons, and the protecting comfort of his physical strength as he towered above her, helped to slacken the tension of her nerves, and with a fluttering sigh she slackened her pace and said, still in a frightened half-whisper:

"Oh, I am so glad to find you, Mr. Yates. I ran out of the house without knowing where to look for you, and turned toward the hotel just as a desperate chance. I did not dare to try to use the telephone, for we are on a college party line. There was no one at hand whom I could trust, and——"

"Pardon me, Miss Brewster, but if this is a matter demanding quick action aren't you telling your story wrong end first? I understand that you think you have done something awfully improper and bold, and all that. But who is in trouble, and where?"

She drew away from him, releasing her clinging hold of his arm, and with a grieved note in her musical voice expostulated:

"I was about to tell you. I suppose my wits are all topsy-turvy. Lawrence Martin and Jerry Hanscom and five or six other Kappa Beta Alpha men followed Mr. Kingsland down the river road to-night. They are going to lie in wait for him, when he is on the way back from the Smatherses' farm, and ride him on a rail and duck him in the old mill pond at



She no more than breathed the words from parted lips.





## THE GIRL WHO DARED

the edge of the town. They think they can drive him away from the college by doing these dreadful, cowardly things; that he will be too ashamed and humiliated to show his face in this place again. Do you think it is too late to get word to him? The Smatherses' farm has no telephone. Oh, it is too shameful for words! I never dreamed that any of our Jameson boys could be guilty of such unmanliness."

Yates struck a match and looked at his watch. Peremptorily bidding her wait where she was, he bolted back to the hotel, bellowed vainly for Henri, and ran to his room, where he caught up his heavy coat and an armful of rugs. Then he fled to the stable and lighted the lamps of his car. A hasty, vigilant examination showed him that the great machine was fit and ready for the road; and he set the engine going, jumped to the driver's seat, and swung out into the roadway, careening around the corner of the darkened side street with one tremendous blast of the horn. Mildred Brewster had obeyed orders. She had not dared to run away from this big, masterful man who had come out of the West to do as he pleased with the college and all who dwelt therein. Deftly halting the car, he leaped out, gripped the girl around the waist, and tossed her inboard beside him as he shouted:

"Where is Acton Street, number two nine five? I want Pumpelly and as many of his pals as can pile

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in with us. If they really intend to ride George Kingsland on a rail, this is going to be no kindergarten party."

"I—I—oh, I can't go with you!" she gasped. "I can't do it. I didn't expect to. Please—please let me out."

"Nonsense! I can't find the way alone. Here, let me get this big coat around you," was his brusque reply. "We're off. How about Acton Street?"

"Three blocks ahead, and then to the right," she faltered; and on the instant the car shot forward and gathered headway with the power of sixty horses. The girl's eyes were wet with angry tears, but she made no more protest, while her abductor was too much absorbed in his delicate and hazardous task of safely guiding this wild flight to try to soothe her. It seemed no more than a minute before he paid heed to her warning gesture and slackened speed to stop in search of Pumpelly.

Whether or not it was in her mind to desert him, she was given no chance; for he raised his voice in a tremendous roar of summons, and the Freshman captain poked his head from an attic window. Kingsland had taught him to obey orders without argument, and a few words of strenuous command sufficed to set this lodging-house a-clatter with a din as if all the inmates were falling down-stairs at the same instant. Pumpelly landed on the side-

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walk, still wriggling into his coat, and sputtered assuringly:

"Three of the men were playing cards in my room, and I picked up two more husky lads on the next floor. Hi, there, you fellows, tumble in! If you can't find seats, hang on by your teeth. All right, Mr. Yates, let her go."

Mildred Brewster unclasped her hands and caught Yates by the sleeve, imploring him:

"Let me go home. I shall be only in the way. These boys can tell you where to go. You don't need me. What will be said of me? Why don't you——"

Yates turned to look at her, and asked, with a brutal candor that was more staggering than anything else she had thus far endured:

"Why did you come to the rescue in the first place? Don't you want to know what has happened to Kingsland?"

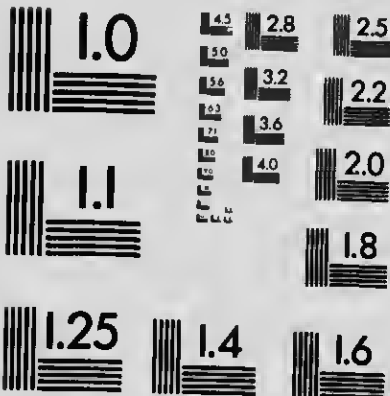
"I—I—wanted to save the college from disgrace," she faltered, but her voice was not as convincing as when she added: "Yes, I do want to know as soon as I can. I have not been fair to him."

Ah, now she was confessing the truth that was wrung from her heart by the compelling stress of circumstances; and Yates smiled grimly as he cautioned his passengers to hold tight and let the car purr down the long hill that led to the river road.



# MICROCOPY RESOLUTION TEST CHART

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## THE HEAD COACH

In the starlight the houses fled past like dim, shapeless phantoms. Although the air was still, the wind shouted like a gale past the automobile, which swayed and bounded over the rutted, ill-kept highway. Soon it became perilous to rush at this headlong pace lest gully or boulder might wreck the expedition; and Yates drove more prudently, swearing under his breath, vowing death and destruction to the ambushed assailants. Suddenly it occurred to him to ask Mildred Brewster, between jolts of the laboring machine:

"How did you find it out?"

"Lawrence Martin told me," she confessed, with the most painful reluctance. "He took it for granted that I would not betray him. I didn't know what to do at first. I lost my courage and hated myself, and——"

Yates shrugged his massive shoulders and said, with a contemptuous laugh that stung her beyond words:

"You must have been saying some pretty nasty things about Kingsland, a good many of them, or Martin would not have thought you fit to trust with this wretched business."

Insulted, angered, helpless, she was about to answer him in a stumbling, passionate justification, when he brought the car to a stop and turned to ask Pumpelly:

## THE GIRL WHO DARED

"What do you fellows think about going ahead on foot from here? There is nothing but open fields on both sides of the road as far as I can see, and the chances are all against a hold-up without some kind of better cover than this."

"Do you mean to take 'em by surprise? Wouldn't it be bully?" chuckled the Freshman captain.

"There is a little patch of woods about half a mile further on with high banks on both sides of the road. Ten to one they will lay for Mr. Kingsland in there."

"Good enough. Break two or three fence rails into clubs, and don't be afraid to use them. I'll push the car along easy. We can move nearer before we get out. The engine makes very little noise."

"Are you going to leave me alone?" piteously implored Mildred Brewster, frightened by this plan of campaign.

"No, one of us must stay with you, I suppose," said Yates, with no great enthusiasm, for he was not in a readily forgiving mood.

The car crept forward, lights extinguished, like an uncouth blotch, almost without sound. Yates was about to steer to the road-side and order his force to disembark, when from the darkness ahead there came a confused noise of shouting, cries of pain, and a moment later a louder hubbub, as if the plan of attacking Kingsland had been suddenly disorganized.



## THE HEAD COACH

Forgetting all about the lone and lorn damsel who was their unwilling companion, Yates and his party dashed forward to the rescue. They had run no more than a hundred yards when a quick-eared Freshman panted:

"I hear somebody coming toward us, and he is surely burning the wind."

Louder came the drumming, staccato echo of foot-falls furiously pounding along a bit of hard road. Yates surmised the truth and sternly cautioned silence. The fugitive was coming nearer a tremendous pace, and now there could be heard the rat-tat-tat of the flying feet of several pursuers. A few seconds and George Kingsland bolted, with head down, straight into the arms of Joshua Yates who crashed to earth with a prodigious grunt. The bewildered coach began to pummel this new adversary, who heaved himself clear and blurted indignantly:

"Don't you know your friends, you old idiot? Get together and help us receive the rash lads that were playing checkers on your coat-tails."

Pumpelly dragged the coach to his feet and exhorted his comrades with a ferocious yell:

"Lay for Martin and Hanscom and make 'em prisoners. Up, guards, and at 'em. Wow-wow-wow!"

Yates was still fighting to regain his wind, but he shouted incoherent approval of the strategy and

## THE GIRL WHO DARED

charged up the road full tilt. The enemy, almost on top of them, tried to take warning and veer into the obscure fields. But before headway could be checked, Yates, Pumpelly, and Kingsland, the Freshman allies at their heels, catapulted straight into the startled, panicky mob.

The combat was brief. Might and right swept the lawless gang like a landslide. The burly figure of Josh Yates raged in the starlight like one of the Seven Champions of Christendom, and to his great joy he fell afoul of Lawrence Martin in the first onset. A swing of his mighty arm drove his hammer of a fist against the jaw of this unlucky youth, who fell to earth with a thump that showed his entire lack of interest in any subsequent proceedings. His followers began to scatter into the fields, hotly pursued by the stalwart Freshmen, while Joseph Pumpelly, a devastating avenger, made after Jerry Hanscom as his particular prey; for he had recognized the horror-smitten voice of the manager raised in a vain cry for succor.

Altogether it was a brilliant sortie, and although most of the young villains escaped in the darkness, Martin, Hanscom, and one other, Henderson by name, were captured by force of arms and dragged back toward the automobile. They were a silent, frightened trio when Joshua Yates marshalled them in front of his searchlight, and said to Kingsland:

## THE HEAD COACH

"Well, 'Deacon,' they are your meat. What are you going to do with them? While I have been a humble spectator of more than one lynching bee in Colorado, I fancy a rope and a handy tree are considered somewhat hasty in New England—what?"

"Kick 'em every step of the way from here to the college," was the suggestion interposed by Joseph Pumpelly, whose red blood was fighting hot and who cared not a whit that these were upper class-men.

Kingsland had stepped back out of the searchlight's glaring range, and was staring, wide-eyed, at the front seat of the automobile, whereon a silent, muffled figure was vaguely discernible. There was something feminine and appealing about the drooping outline of this lone passenger, and, with an intuition that served him better than his eyesight, the coach asked unsteadily:

"Who is that, Josh? Don't bother about the captives just now. I—I—why, no, it can't possibly be!"

Mildred Brewster could not evade the meeting, and, resolving to play the melodrama out as courageously as possible, she leaned forward and said, in a voice vibrant with feeling:

"I am very, very glad that no harm has come to you, Mr. Kingsland. I tried to help you—that is—Mr. Yates must explain. He kidnapped me. Your friend is a most high-handed person, not fit to be at large. But I have decided to forgive him."

## THE GIRL WHO DARED

"Oh, by Jove!" cried Yates, in great excitement. "What did they do to you, 'Deacon?' I forgot to ask. We heard the very deuce of a shindy going on before you came flying down the pike touching only the high spots."

The coach pulled himself together as if he had been whisked from an entrancing dream, and answered confusedly:

"Nothing at all. No consequence whatever. They lit on me from behind the trees and I broke away. I skinned my knuckles against a couple of them. There ought to be a broken nose and a black eye or two to help identification to-morrow. Did you really want to help me, Miss Brewster? What—why, upon my word, I can't believe that you are one of the rescue party! It all sounds too good to be true."

"And a nice mess you made of it, Mildred," angrily cried Lawrence Martin, whom Pumpelly was holding fast by the neck with a grip of iron. "You gave us away. I never heard of such a dirty trick. Fine lot of college spirit you have, I don't think. Wait till I tell Uncle—ouch; oh, you are killing me!"

Pumpelly was twisting his neck with one hand and slapping his face with the other, while, by way of sympathetic co-operation, Yates methodically kicked Jerry Hanscom. It was a Freshman who had

## THE HEAD COACH

hitherto let his deeds speak for themselves that now piped up from the shadows with a bit of brilliant advice:

"Why not march the three of them back to Dick Smatherses' barn and lock 'em up overnight as hostages? I'll be glad to stay up and stand guard."

"Same here!" "Me, too!" "Oh, lovely!" exclaimed the others, in gleeful chorus.

"The hostage idea sounds good," said Kingsland. "They were caught red-handed and the faculty can't have very much to say this time."

"You mean before we turn them over to the police, I suppose," added Yates, with the grin of an ogre about to lunch on his victims. "It is the clearest kind of a case. Evidence all complete—felonious assault, conspiracy, and several other dastardly crimes. They'll get a couple of years in the penitentiary."

The trio of miserable young wretches trembled in their shoes. Martin began to whimper at thought of this hideous prospect. It was any port in a storm, and he turned a begrimed, twitching face toward the automobile and brokenly implored:

"Put in a word for me, Mildred, for God's sake. It was all a joke. You can get me out of this. You don't want to see me in jail, do you? Mr. Kingsland will do anything in the world for you. Anybody can see that he is head over heels in——"

## THE GIRL WHO DARED

As the candle is snuffed out, so did the quick-witted young Pumpelly extinguish the garrulous Martin, at this delicate juncture, by tripping him and sitting on his head. Kingsland tried to hide his consternation by exclaiming, with great emphasis:

"Keep that young blackguard quiet or I'll take him in charge myself. Josh, you had better take Miss Brewster home in your car. We will take the prisoners down to Smatherses' and tuck them away in the barn. No guards will be needed if the place can be locked up tight. Dick Smathers is not very ill, and the excitement will do him no harm. There is no fight left in these fraternity heroes."

"All right, 'Deacon.' I will take Miss Brewster home and come back for you, part way, anyhow. The road is passable this far."

Every one of the Freshmen refused point-blank to be carried to college in the car. They formed a triumphal procession in the wake of their quarry, and began to sing the Freshman class song as a pæan of victory. Kingsland stepped to the front of the automobile and murmured thanks and good-night. Mildred Brewster gave him her hand, and its pressure was true and warm as she said:

"This seems to be more than a truce, Mr. Kingsland. I have deserted my colors to-night to fight on your side."

Yates shouted hearty farewell, and the car skidded

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down the embankment and turned toward the town, while the Freshmen cheered themselves breathless. Kingsland returned to lead the rogues' march toward the Smatherses' barn. Already he felt compassion for the plight of these misguided youngsters who had regarded him as a menace to their college. He had no intention of turning them over to the police, but it would do no harm to leave them alone with their thoughts overnight. They had posed as college leaders, and the surest way of pricking the bubble of their pretensions was to make them ridiculous in the eyes of their friends. He called Pumpelly aside and whispered:

"I am for letting you Freshmen escort them back to the campus to-morrow morning and turn them over to their brothers at their chapter house with a plain statement of the facts. They will be laughed at as long as they stay in college."

But the implacable gladiator of a Joseph Pumpelly was not to be so easily tamed. He demanded that the victims be made stern examples of, and regretted that burning at the stake was no longer in fashion.

"They were going to ride you on a rail and duck you in the mill pond," he grumbled. "Great Heavens, think of it! I want to see them expelled from college before sunset to-morrow."

"Well, Joseph, my boy"—and the coach's voice was very gentle—"I may seem rough and stubborn

## THE GIRL WHO DARED

on the foot-ball field, but I have started my life by an old-fashioned Book that tells you to bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and to pray for them that despitefully use and persecute you. We want to give these boys another chance, don't we? I have not been weak-kneed in handling them so far, and I still hope to convince them that they have been mistaken in their opinion of me. They need a strong hand, but it never pays to be vindictive."

Pumpelly ruminated over this advice for some time, tramping silently along the highway. Then he said:

"Right you are, as usual, Mr. Kingsland. But would it be wrong to give them a taste of riding on a rail from here to Smatherses' barn?"

Kingsland's eyes twinkled as he answered:

"If you are careful to whittle off the sharp edges, Joseph, I see nothing vindictive in giving these weary young men a lift for the rest of the journey. A taste of their own medicine, humanely administered, might help make the lesson stick. It cannot be considered cruel or unusual punishment. I am pretty sure they had no intention of whittling off the edges for me."

With a joyous shout, Joseph ran to the road-side and returned with three weather-worn, split rails, which were hastily shaved down with pocket-knives.



## THE HEAD COACH

The prisoners fought hard, but presently they were hoisted aloft, clinging to their precarious perches, while the Freshmen bore the burdens right gleefully, and in this fashion the singular procession turned into the dooryard of the Smathers farm. Kingsland soon explained the mission to the amused father of Dick, who sallied forth with a lantern and cheerily declared:

"The hay-barn locks up as tight as a drum. There's no cattle in it to be disgraced by such bad company, and there's plenty of bedding to be got with a pitchfork. Search their clothes for pipes and matches and cigarettes, and be sure you don't leave 'em anything to set the place afire with, and they'll be snug and warm as can be. Set out to play tricks with you, did they? Picked the wrong man. Ho, ho, this will do Dick more good than a barrel o' pills! If you leave 'em in there to-morrow, blessed if I don't start a peep show, and charge my neighbors ten cents apiece to see the only college students ever exhibited in captivity."

## CHAPTER XI

### THE FRESHMAN CAPTAIN

THE captives in the barn were very sulky and dejected when bright and early next morning at least fifty Freshmen came marching down from Spindle Falls to act as an escort back to the campus. They were singing at the top of their voices, "Oh, dear, what can the matter be?" while Joseph Pumpelly pranced in the lead and beat time with a cane adorned with a huge bow of ribbon of the colors of his class. Mr. Smathers met them in the dooryard, and to the clamorous questions answered, with so enjoyable a series of chuckles that they seemed to come all the way up from his boots:

"I gave 'em a pail of warm milk right from the cow and a loaf of bread while I was doing the chores, and they never even said thank you. I suppose they're amusin' themselves now picking the hayseed from their hair and sprucing up to meet the reception committee. I'm good-hearted enough to lend 'em a curry-comb if they've a mind to ask for it."

## THE HEAD COACH

"All of them upper class-men," gleefully shouted a bold Freshman who had thrown consequences to the winds. "Gee whiz, won't it be just nuts for us to parade around the campus with the prisoners!"

"No, let's turn them loose in front of their fraternity house," spoke up another. "If we get too gay there will be a general riot."

Pumpelly took charge of the proceedings at this point and, mounting a horse-block, addressed his loyal following in these words:

"Now, fellows, I have been figuring it out overnight, and I am in favor of turning the criminals over to the Dean and letting him serve out the punishment. Just between us, it will put old Hemphill in a hole for fair, because he can't afford to let Martin and Hanscom and Henderson go scot-free after their performance last night. No rough-house, mind you. You will march back to the campus two by two and be as solemn as boiled owls."

The orator strode to the barn, unlocked the big doors, and invited the guests of Mr. Smathers to come forth. They shrank back at sight of the waiting crowd of Freshmen, but there was no room for argument, and, making the best of it, Lawrence Martin walked out very sheepishly, his comrades in misfortune at his heels. Hanscom shook his fist at the grinning Pumpelly and muttered:

"You are the blamedest, freshest Freshman that

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ever came to Jameson. You think you are on top with Kingsland and his nuisance of a friend, Yates, backing you up. But you haven't heard the last of this incident, not by a long shot."

"Perhaps you did not sleep well in a strange bed," politely suggested Pumpelly. "You seem quite bad-tempered this morning. As prominent a man as you are ought to have grit enough to take his medicine. You fellows were whipped at your own game, and I should think you would be ashamed to squeal. Right about face! Forward, march!"

Lawrence Martin was about to explode in an angry protest, when the Freshman chorus lifted its voices in the refrain:

*"But, oh, what a difference in the morning!"*

In sullen silence the captives trudged along the highway, flanked by stalwart body-guards, while the remainder of the company trailed behind in high spirits. In this order they came at length to the campus, where the grand marshal, Pumpelly, craftily shifted the line of march to pass behind the college buildings, lest a rescuing party of upper class-men might descend in force and spoil the programme. Without mishap the procession made its strategic circuit and halted in front of the hall wherein was the office of the Dean. Then, after triumphantly yelling the class cheer, the Freshmen broke ranks and loafed about in excited groups, while Pumpelly and his

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trusty aides escorted Martin, Hanscom, and Henderson into the building.

Dean Hemphill was not in the least prepared for the invasion. In fact, he had heard nothing of the stirring episodes of the last twelve hours, not even from that fair conspirator in his own household, Mildred Brewster, who had chosen to keep her own counsel for obvious reasons. Surmising that a crowd of admiring students were cheering him as a sort of impromptu tribute, he advanced blandly toward the door and was confronted by his scarecrow of a nephew, whose garments, sadly rumped, were still decorated with bits of clover and timothy and whose countenance bore traces of the fray. Joseph Pumpelly, very much the man for the occasion, was bound to have the first word, and breathlessly explained before the Dean could unlimber his own heavy battery of language:

"They tried to mob Mr. Kingsland, sir—to duck him and ride him out of town on a rail last night. We caught them at it and knocked the stuffing out of them, and locked them up overnight. You don't propose to stand for this sort of thing, do you?"

Dean Hemphill stared at the group, puffed out his cheeks, and pompously declaimed:

"This is most unseemly—most unheard of. I cannot believe it. Come into my office, young gentlemen. As for you, Pumpelly, I have been watching

## THE FRESHMAN CAPTAIN

you for some time and your conduct has not pleased me."

"My goodness, I'm not guilty," gasped Joseph. "I guess you didn't understand what I said. You have put the cart before the horse. I am turning these ruffians over to *you*. I am not one of the prisoners."

"You have been spreading a lawless spirit in the college," the Dean rejoined as severely as before. "Ride Mr. Kingsland on a rail? Absolutely preposterous! It sounds like a device to gain sympathy for his totally uncalled-for foot-ball crusade. Sit down, if you please. Now, Lawrence, what about this charge against you?"

Pumpelly gazed about him with an air of ludicrous bewilderment, scratched his head, and then vehemently interrupted:

"I beg your pardon, Dr. Hemphill, but are you not going to listen first to the facts in the case? We caught them red-handed, in the very act, sir. Mr. Kingsland doesn't want to appear against them, but we have plenty of other witnesses."

"One at a time, young man," sternly chided the Dean.

"But I *am* only one at a time," logically observed Pumpelly.

"You have already told me your story. Now, what has the other side to say for itself?" and the

## THE HEAD COACH

Dean turned toward Martin, Hanscom, and Henderson with a more encouraging manner. Lawrence Martin plucked up courage to say with as careless a demeanor as he was able to assume:

"It was a harmless lark, sir. We don't like Kingsland and his ways, and we planned to give him a bit of a scare, that was all. There has been a good deal of feeling, as you know, and this was just blowing off steam. I am sure you don't want to be bothered with class or fraternity affairs that happen away from the campus. This was no more than the kind of thing that goes on when the Sophomores kidnap the Freshmen to keep them away from their class supper. Isn't that so, Jerry?"

Before Hanscom could pluck up spirit to agree with this explanation, Pumpelly burst out impetuously:

"Oh yes, there is all the difference in the world. There was a dirty, malicious spirit behind this affair. It was absolutely contemptible. You are twisting the fact to suit your own purpose, Martin, and to put me in the wrong. Why don't you own up like a man? You make me sick."

The Dean brought his fist down on the desk with a bang and fairly snorted:

"Pumpelly, when you are in a mood to discuss this matter calmly and quietly, I will listen to what more you may have to say. I wish to be perfectly fair to you, but your behavior is intolerable. You

## THE FRESHMAN CAPTAIN

will report to me at two o'clock this afternoon for further conference."

Chagrined beyond words by this unjust dismissal, the Freshman picked up his cap, beckoned to his comrades, and stalked from the building.

"We can't get a square deal," he gloomily told them. "You fellows can chase yourselves to your recitations. I am going to cut the next class and talk things over with Mr. Kingsland."

He found the coach in the company of Josh Yates, who noted his downcast manner and cheerily exclaimed:

"Why so pensive, my human battering-ram of a side-partner? Did the captives gnaw their way out of the barn last night? What is the latest from the seat of war?"

"We took them to the Dean and he wouldn't listen to me—as much as threw me out on my head, and is letting Martin and Hanscom pull the wool over his eyes," sadly answered the Freshman. "I have made myself more unpopular than ever."

"I did not dream that you would make such a foolish move as that," said Kingsland. "I presumed that you intended to turn the prisoners loose without any ceremony. I think I had better run over and see the Dean myself. I don't want those fellows officially punished. It will make more bad feeling than ever."



## THE HEAD COACH

Very much crestfallen, Pumpelly muttered:

"I guess I put my foot in it by going ahead without orders from you. But from the way I sized up the situation in the Dean's office, I am the lad that is in danger of punishment. It twisted off at the wrong tangent, and all I could do was sit there and blink and wonder if I was going crazy. Yes, he actually scolded *me*."

"It will do no harm for me to interview His Majesty," said the coach. "It may give me a chance to straighten his viewpoint . . . bit."

"I wish you luck," Yates spoke up. "As for me, I would sooner interview the Mad Mullah, armed only with a pea-shooter. Once was most decidedly enough for Joshua."

Pumpelly glanced out of the window at the tower clock, concluded that he had better attend the next recitation after all, and shot out of the door with the farewell injunction to Kingsland:

"Don't let him bamboozle *you*. I shall be anxious to hear the result. I'll drop in at noon-time, if you don't mind, just to frame up my tactics when I meet the Dean this afternoon."

The coach found Dr. Hemphill in quite a different humor from that which had routed the Freshmen in confusion. The Dean perceived that it would be most unwise to try to browbeat this resolute and mature young man who had his temper under con-

## THE FRESHMAN CAPTAIN

trol, and who evidently thought before he spoke. Unwittingly, however, Kingsland played right into the Dean's hands by saying in mild tones:

"I hope you will not be severe with the fellows who tried to make it hot for me last night. I wish to stir up no more antagonisms and I expect to win the rebels over to my side, particularly Lawrence Martin."

Now, the Dean had been in an uncomfortable state of mind after his unfair treatment of Joseph Pumpelly. He was fond of his nephew, Martin, and he was also sadly biased and wrong-headed in his views of the foot-ball situation. A shrewd and careful cross-questioning of the culprits, however, had convinced him against his will that the attack on Kingsland had been outrageous, cowardly, and lawless, and that it was his duty to take official notice of it. It had been his comfortable habit to side with the majority, to keep his ear to the ground, so to speak, and to follow popular opinion even while he made a great show of leading it. Inwardly he was rather afraid of Kingsland and Yates in combination, and he was not ready to force the issue to a fighting finish unless he was very sure that the advantage was all on his side. After due reflection he replied to the coach's generous speech with heavy, deliberate emphasis:

"It is a most unfortunate affair, Mr. Kingsland.

## THE HEAD COACH

I do not hold you guiltless, for, as you know, I am of the opinion that you have stirred up a great deal of most needless hostility and bad feeling. I am not prepared at this time, however, to take up the question of foot-ball policy. I was, of course, inclined to punish Martin, Hanscom, and Henderson, but the fact that you wish to intercede for them makes a difference. Perhaps it will be just as well, if you are unwilling to appear against them, to let them off with a severe reprimand. You must see that the charges fall to the ground unless you present your evidence of what occurred last night."

"Oh, I have no intention of appearing against them," said Kingsland. "And I am very glad to hear that you are willing to be lenient. But, as for holding me guilty of any responsibility——"

The Dean waved his arm and made frowning reply:

"I prefer not to go into that phase of the matter to-day. If you will be kind enough to excuse me—I have an important engagement. Good-morning."

"Then Pumpelly need not come back to see you this afternoon?"

"No, that hot-headed and meddlesome young man need not return."

Kingsland wanted to fling back some reply in defence of his Freshman captain, but while he was trying to pick his words the Dean strode grandly

## THE FRESHMAN CAPTAIN

through the doorway leading to another office and the opportunity was lost. When Kingsland reported the conversation to Josh Yates, that worldly-wise young man laughed and commented:

"You pulled the Dean out of a deucedly awkward situation, old man. He must feel much obliged to you."

"I suppose he was glad to find an excuse to save the scalps of those young rascals, Josh, but I couldn't do anything else. I was never able to hold a grudge very long. And they are awfully young and flighty and they can't see beyond the end of their own noses. Don't you remember the time we rolled "Snoopy" Morgan, the Latin tutor, in a snow-bank because he accused Jim Stearns of cribbing in an examination—a crime poor old Jim never dreamed of committing?"

"And I came precious near being fired from college for it," chortled Yates. "Well, the returns seem to be all in, with the exception of the case of the sturdy Pumpelly lad. He has surely stacked up trouble for himself."

"Too much zeal and initiative," said Kingsland. "Yes, Martin and Hanscom and the fraternity crowd will be simply wild at him. I can see that far, though you do think I am thick-headed. If the Freshmen had been content with their triumph, Pumpelly would have shared the blame with the rest of the crowd. But he had to lug those fellows up

## THE HEAD COACH

to the Dean's office in disgrace and make himself so conspicuous as the leader that I am afraid a fine, large desire for vengeance is already brewing in the fraternity houses, and Kappa Beta Alpha in particular."

"Pumpelly is pretty well able to take care of himself, don't you think, 'Deacon'?"

"Yes, I cannot see how they can reach him, but I shall put him on his guard."

Joseph Pumpelly was so foolish as to underestimate the enemy, even after the coach had warned him to keep close watch on the movements of the brethren of Kappa Beta Alpha. That very afternoon young Wilbur Henderson, late a captive in the Smathers barn, might have been seen to dodge through the side streets to the railroad station in Spindle Falls and take a train bound to the town of Brookfield on the banks of the Kennebec. Two hours later he walked into the most pretentious mansion in a street of fine, old-fashioned New England homes and was greeted by his father, an alert, well-groomed man with grizzled hair and close-cropped mustache, who exclaimed:

"Well, Wilbur, I am glad to see you. We were not looking for you before Saturday. How are things in college?"

"Oh, considerably stirred up just now. I thought I'd run up overnight as I happen to have no recita-

## THE FRESHMAN CAPTAIN

tions until noon to-morrow, and I sort of hankered for home. Mother and 'Sis' all right?"

"Yes, indeed. They are out driving. I expect them back soon. Come into the library. What is the latest news about foot-ball and the cantankerous coach?"

"Worse and more of it. The team has gone all to pieces, and the coach is as stubborn as a mule, and there is the dickens to pay generally."

This Wilbur Henderson had no intention of misrepresenting the facts. He honestly believed that the fraternity men were right and Kingsland all wrong, and that the fate of Jameson athletics was at stake. He had made this hasty trip home, inspired by a plan which he considered as justified by the conditions existing on the campus. While he had a personal grudge to satisfy, this was only one of the issues. With his mission in mind he answered his father's next question as follows:

"Joe Pumpelly is the ringleader of the ruction and the mainstay of the imitation foot-ball team that is disgracing the college. His head is swelled because Kingsland made him captain in a fake election, and there is no doing anything with him."

"I am surprised," said Mr. Henderson. "Joe was always a hard-working lad who minded his own business, and I admired his pluck for undertaking to work his way through college. I expect his father

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in to-night, by the way, and perhaps we can persuade him to take the boy in hand."

"Good! That is a matter I want to talk over with you. It is really what brought me home to-day. If the old man could be persuaded to forbid Joe to play foot-ball for the rest of the season affairs might be straightened out. Anyhow, it would spike the coach's guns and give the real foot-ball men a chance to make some headway against the rebels. The whole thing is simply disgraceful."

Although their boyhood years had been lived in the same town, Wilbur Henderson and Joe Pumpelly had not been playmates. The one was the son of the wealthy mill owner, the magnate of the community, while the other was the only son of a farmer whose chief problem was to make both ends meet. Wilbur had gone away to a preparatory school early in his teens, and during his vacations had assumed a rather superior air toward the humble, plodding lads among whom he had been reared. His humiliation, therefore, at being overthrown by Pumpelly and made an object of public derision was especially poignant, although he was too greatly ashamed of his part in the episode to mention it to his father. He was about to say something more about the necessity of laying the facts before the elder Pumpelly when his sister Katharine entered the library. She was a frank and breezy girl of eighteen who

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stood in no awe whatever of an upper class-man of Jameson College, and habitually poked fun at Wilbur's airs and graces.

"I presume that you have been sent home by the faculty. If not, I am sure you ought to be," she cried. "Mother is still making calls, and I walked home. Have I broken into a secret session? Are you trying to explain to dad where this term's allowance had gone, Wilbur?"

"We were discussing Joe Pumpelly," very weightily replied the brother, as if a girl was too frivolous by nature to comprehend important affairs of state.

"And what has that very able-bodied young man been doing now? Have you been trying to haze him and did he stand you on your head? He is perfectly capable of accomplishing it."

This random shot came so near to hitting the bull's-eye that the brother blushed to his ears and stammered in great confusion:

"Hazing! Nonsense! I outgrew all that kind of thing after Sophomore year. No, I have been telling father that Joe has got to be suppressed for the good of the college."

"Oh my, is he as important as all that?" she returned mockingly. "And he is nothing but a Freshman! The last time you were home it was the foot-ball coach—what's his name—Kingsland—"



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who had to be suppressed. Now it is Joe that requires a lion-tamer. Do tell me all about it."

Her brother thereupon related the sad story, carefully expurgating the inglorious attempt to ride the coach on a rail, and Katharine demurely paid heed. At the conclusion of the tragic recital she asked eagerly:

"And what does Mildred Brewster think of all this? Living right in the Dean's house and knowing all you Kappa Beta Alpha boys, she must be rather close to the storm centre."

"I forgot you had met her," uneasily observed Wilbur.

"Of course I met her, at Commencement last June. And I think she is just the loveliest thing! I am crazy about her! I have been planning to invite her up here for a house-party between Thanksgiving and Christmas."

The brother was evidently perturbed as he stared into space and became so busy with his own reflections that Katharine was more curious than ever. If these two girls should meet, thought he, the cat would be out of the bag. His sister would learn all about the affair of the Smathers barn, and his hostility toward Joe Pumpelly would appear in a very different light. His temper got the better of him, and he flung back:

"I don't see what Mildred Brewster has to do

## THE FRESHMAN CAPTAIN

with it. What is the sense of dragging her into the matter?"

"You have a guilty and hunted look. And you have no reason to be so rude and peevish if your conscience is clear," was her reply. "What I want to know is which faction Mildred Brewster is siding with. And I intend to find out if I have to write to her."

Terrified by this threat, the youth reluctantly confessed:

"She is silly enough to side with the coach, although at first she had a gleam of human intelligence and stood by our crowd."

"Then your crowd is probably wrong," was the confident verdict.

"Come, come, Katharine, don't tease the boy," said Mr. Henderson. "These problems seem the most important things in the world to him, and while you are a very wise and level-headed young person, you don't know very much about the facts in the case."

"Very well, if I am to be snubbed I shall rid you of my unwelcome presence," with which she whisked up-stairs.

Early in the evening the father of Joseph Pummelly called, as had been expected, and while Wilbur had been considerably upset by his sister's attack, he rallied to do his best to accomplish the purpose

## THE HEAD COACH

of his journey. Henry Pumpelly was a weather-beaten, kindly featured man, tall and rawboned, like his son, but round-shouldered from many years of unremitting toil in field and meadow and wood-lot. His manner as he was shown into the library was somewhat abashed and awkward, as if he were unused to such luxury of surroundings.

"Sit down, Henry. Have a cigar?" heartily exclaimed Mr. Henderson. "How are all the folks?"

"All well, thank you. Why, hello, Wilbur, you'll be a man after a while if you keep on growing," said the farmer, nodding to the collegian, whose countenance was solemn as befitted one with a momentous duty confronting him. "About that wood, Mr. Henderson, I have about twenty cords cut in four-foot lengths, and I can haul it any time now."

"All right. I am ready to take it. And about teaming this winter, do you expect to work as many horses in the woods as you did last season?"

They discussed business matters for some time, while Wilbur fidgeted impatiently, until at length Henry Pumpelly glanced up from under his heavy brows and said:

"How's college these days? See anything of my boy Joe?"

"Yes, I saw him this morning," replied Wilbur. "I guess he is feeling fit. He certainly looked it."

## THE FRESHMAN CAPTAIN

"He seems to be head over ears in foot-ball," resumed the father. "But he hasn't let his studies suffer, as far as I can find out. He's been too busy to write for some time."

Mr. Henderson decided to put his oar in and made haste to say:

"Then you have not heard much about the row that has turned the college upside down? You and I have known each other a long while, Henry, and you always seemed to think a good deal of my judgments. From what I can learn, the best thing you can do is to tell Joe to quit playing foot-ball for this year. His intentions are probably honest, but he has got the faculty and most of the students down on him and is listening to bad advice."

"Now, that doesn't sound a bit like Joe," slowly returned Henry Pumpelly. "I'm much obliged for your interest in him, but I should like to hear his side of the story. If the boy thinks he's right he won't give a darn for the faculty and the college. And I wouldn't be a mite surprised to find out that Joe *is* right. I naturally take the part of the under dog, 'specially when it is a pup of my own raising."

"But as soon as I acquaint you with the facts, I am sure—" began Mr. Henderson, when his daughter appeared in the doorway leading from the hall and said:

"I beg your pardon, but some one wishes to speak with Mr. Pumpelly on the telephone."

## THE HEAD COACH

Katharine's eyes danced mischievously, and Wilbur shifted nervously in his chair, suspecting that there was something behind this commonplace announcement. Henry Pumpelly walked heavily into the hall, picked up the receiver, and proceeded to conduct his end of the conversation in this highly interesting fashion:

"Is that really you, Joe? In college, are you? Called up the house and ma told you I was over here? Kind of reckless with your long-distance calls, unless it's a matter of life or death.

"Yes, Wilbur is home. He's right in the next room and can hear every word I say.

"What's that? You found out from the station agent that he had flown the coop, hey? And you smelled a rat?

"What kind of a rat? Oh, I want to know!

"Yes, his daddy just told me that I ought to yank you off the foot-ball team.

"A put-up job? Be careful, Joe. I'm right in their house. You're on the warpath, are you?

"Ho, ho! locked 'em up in a barn! And dragged them up to the Dean's office! If that don't beat all! No wonder they don't like you.

"The foot-ball team is all right, is it? And you're the captain?

"Pretty good for a Freshman. I'm proud of you.

## THE FRESHMAN CAPTAIN

"No, I won't do anything rash. Write your mother all about it so she won't worry.

"I'll hear what Mr. Henderson has to say, but I'll suspend judgment.

"No, you don't have to quit playing. Maybe I'll come down to see one of the games. Bring mother? You bet I will.

"You want me to meet the coach? He must be a lively minister of the gospel.

"All right, Joe. Good-night. God bless you."

The father returned to the library, his face beaming with pride, and said by way of apology:

"It must have sounded kind of queer. Hope you took no offence. What were you about to tell me about the boy?"

Mr. Henderson colored, looked at his son, and answered:

"It is not worth while now, Henry. Perhaps I had no right to say anything at all. You would take no stock in my information; I can see that very clearly."

"Joe never lied to me yet, Mr. Henderson. He says he is fighting with a minority that has the right all on its side, and I guess his word is good enough for me. I don't mean to say that you have anything but the best intentions, only it's possible that you were misinformed."

Wilbur gulped, became slightly pale, and spoke up:

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"I think I'll go out for a little walk and then join mother up-stairs, if you don't mind."

With this he departed and was promptly way-laid at the front door by his sister, who inquired eagerly:

"Is Joe Pumpelly going to be allowed to play?"

"What do you know about it? Were you snooping outside the library?"

"I snooped some," she candidly confessed, "but I did not hear the finish of it."

The brother scowled darkly and his accents were savage as he retorted:

"And what business was it of yours, I want to know? Girls are always butting in. If it will do you any good, Joe's father says he can play football. You heard him say it at the telephone, didn't you?"

"Oh yes, indeed, but it is more fun to hear it from you. I was so afraid my scheme might not work."

"What scheme? What did you have to do with it?" he growled.

"Oh, I called up Mildred Brewster while you were getting ready for dinner," sweetly explained the resourceful Katharine. "And I asked her to tell me all about the foot-ball rumpus. Luckily the Dean was out of the house and she could explain the whole situation. Being a woman, I was just naturally

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curious to know, because you were so flustered and mysterious this afternoon. I knew you were holding something back. It seems that she had met Joe Pumpelly on the campus a little earlier, and he had told her of your going home in a hurry, Wilbur. And he was very much worried, she said, that you were going to try to influence his father to forbid his playing foot-ball. I knew Henry Pumpelly was expected to call this evening, to talk about that wood contract for the mill, so I told Miss Brewster to send word to Joe to use the long-distance 'phone for all he was worth, and get hold of his daddy and speak his own little speech right away. It was just too dramatic for anything, wasn't it?"

"What in the dickens do you mean by taking sides against your own father and your own brother?" sputtered the disgusted Wilbur. "I never heard of such a low-down trick."

"Father has nothing to do with it," said she. "Of course he believed every word you told him. You didn't mean to deceive him, but you are dreadfully biased, and those fraternity men have made you see things all crooked. Never mind why I think so. Call it feminine intuition, if you like. Anyhow, I am awfully glad I called up Mildred Brewster. Oh, she sent you a message. I imagine Joe Pumpelly put her up to it. I was to ask if you had combed all the timothy seed out of your hair."



## THE HEAD COACH

"Darn Joe, and you, too," ungallantly exclaimed the wrathful brother, as he brushed past the mirthful Katharine and plunged into the outer darkness.

"You didn't succeed in cutting short his foot-ball career, I notice," she called after him.

## CHAPTER XII

### THE PRODIGIOUS VALOR OF DEACON STILES

DEACON EZRA STILES of Mason Corners ambled into the warm and spicy kitchen, hung up his hat and great-coat, "scatted" the cat from the cushion of his favorite rocking-chair by the stove, and, pulling off his boots with divers grunts and groans, poked his feet into red knitted slippers and found his spectacles and the latest issue of the *Spindle Falls Gazette*. With laborious diligence he scanned the column of news paragraphs labelled "Here and There in Maine," and, discovering no mention of Mason Corners, snorted contempt for the editor's lack of enterprise and began to peruse the head-lines of the front page. Presently this peppery old gentleman started so violently that he kicked one slipper off, clutched the newspaper with both hands, and yelled at the top of his shrill voice:

## THE HEAD COACH

"Consarn my buttons, mother! Come here this minute. What are you doin' in there, anyhow, when I want you?"

Without waiting an instant for a response to his excited summons, Deacon Stiles hopped from his chair, kicked the unoffending cat from his path, and danced out of the kitchen as if he were stepping on tacks.

A bright-eyed, white-haired woman hurried from a bedroom adjoining and followed the deacon, who had charged into the parlor as if he were about to jump through the nearest window and vanish at full speed like a runaway comet.

"Now, Ezra, what ails you?" she cried reprovingly. "You'll be took sick again if you get so vi'lent. You must have et your supper too fast. Are you in pain?"

Her husband came rocketing back into the kitchen, the newspaper a crumpled ball in his gesticulating fists, and flopped into the rocking-chair, very wheezy of breath. Smoothing the *Gazette* as well as he was able in his wrathful agitation, he aimed a damnatory forefinger at the head-lines which had set him going, and declaimed:

"Look at that, mother! Listen to it! I'm so het up that I don't know that I can see to read the infernal stuff. No, you lemme alone. Of course it ain't so. These editors have to make up lies to fill

## THE VALOR OF DEACON STILES

their sheets with. Air you listenin'? Here's what it says, word for word:

### 'TRIED TO RIDE FOOT-BALL COACH ON A RAIL

*'He Foils the Plot and Turns the Tables, Capturing Ring-leaders, Who Are Dragged to Campus by Coach Kingsland's Handful of Loyal Players*

### 'CAMPUS IN AN UPROAR. MORE HOSTILE DEMONSTRATIONS EXPECTED

*'This Outrage the Climax of Kingsland's Troubles at Jameson College. How He Has Defied Campus Opinion and Ruled Foot-ball as a Czar, Deposing Captains and Players at His Own Sweet Will'*

"That's our parson, mother," roared the deacon, shoving his spectacles far back upon his bald and heated brow. "Them college slim-jims tried to ride our parson on a rail! '*More hostile demonstrations expected,*' huh! So he has been defyin' opinion and stirrin' up a mess of trouble for himself! Now you listen to me, Martha Stiles, Mason Corners ain't goin' to set by an' have her preacher rid on no rails by no passel of ungodly, feather-headed nincompoops of college students. He licked 'em, did he, and bagged th' hull lot of 'em!"

The deacon threw back his head and laughed until his false teeth got adrift. But he was not to

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be diverted from his warlike humor, and thumping the arm of his chair he continued, while his white beard waggled invincible defiance:

“Mason Corners is goin’ to have suthin’ to say about these doin’s. Looks to me like he is playin’ his game lone-handed, mother. An’ I’ll bet the price of a good hoss that Parson Kingsland is in the right from fust to last. I ain’t goin’ to bother to read the fine print. I ain’t got time. Help me into my coat. I’m goin’ out to talk this over with all of the church members I can find. An’ there’ll be a delegation of us folks startin’ out for Spindle Falls on to-morrow mornin’s train. No, mother, you can’t budge me one inch when I’m sot, an’ you know it. An’ I never was more sot than I am this livin’ minute.”

Mrs. Ezra Stiles was too wise to try to thwart this high-stepping purpose; but as she bundled him up to withstand the nipping air, she observed, in a tone of mild surprise:

“Why, Ezra, it’s been only the other day since you came home from ministerial committee meetin’ just as boilin’ mad as you are now because Mr. Kingsland was goin’ away to teach foot-ball at Jameson College. Now you’re crankier than a wet hen because the college won’t let him teach it. I never know which way you’re goin’ to jump, an’ I’ve been studyin’ you almost fifty years.”

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"Women ain't good judges of mens' doin's," chided the deacon, as he caught up his cane, pulled his hat over his ears, and opened the door, which he slammed behind him with a great waste of energy.

Left alone, his wife picked up the *Gazette* and made her slow way through a solid column of highly colored detail of the minister's career as a foot-ball coach. It was a grossly unfair article, siding with his enemies at every point; and honest Martha Stiles became more and more indignant and perplexed as she read this cruel arraignment of a young man whom she loved and admired almost as much as if he were of her own blood. At length she laid down the newspaper, sorrowfully returned to her task of "putting away the wash," and muttered between set lips:

"I don't know as I blame Ezra one mite. If I was a man, I vow I b'lieve I'd traipse right off to that college and tell 'em what I'd thought of 'em, if it was the last word I ever spoke. I'll be worried to death about Ezra every minute he's gone, for fear he'll catch cold or be run over or have his pocket picked or overeat himself; but I s'pose it's downright wicked of me to begrudge his goin', when our minister is in trouble an' every man's hand raised against him. The sooner Mr. Kingsland quits them ungrateful, cantankerous, mischief-makin' city folks, the better for him and Mason Corners."

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Deacon Stiles returned an hour later with the air of a Revolutionary grandsire about to shoulder his flint-lock musket and set out for Bunker Hill. Two red spots glowed in his wrinkled cheeks, he pursed his lips, and his breath came with a whistling sound, as if he were blowing off superfluous steam. Running his hands through his scanty white hair until it resembled an aureole, he tramped to and fro across the kitchen floor, while his wife looked on in her serene, affectionate way, as if she would not be in the least surprised to see him turn handsprings.

"You are nothing but an overgrown boy and always will be till your dyin' day," said she as the deacon fetched up in mid career and kissed her on both cheeks with resounding smacks. "If you're done makin' a ridiculous spectacle of yourself—and thank goodness all the curtains are pulled down—please tell me what you did and who you saw. Had anybody else read the newspaper piece, I want to know?"

"Not till I told 'em," croaked the deacon, who had more agility than breath. "Lemme see, I run across Dr. Hazard in the post-office, an' Squire Knowlton in the store, and Major Billings just gettin' into his democrat wagon, and the Ellsworth boys arguin' the tariff in the livery-stable as usual, an' a scatterin' of folks in general goin' home with the mail. And every man Jack of 'em was madder 'n a hornet's

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nest when I told 'em what Jameson College had been doin' to our minister. Even Squire Knowlton cussed right out loud and swore he'd be jim-damned if Mason Corners and the old church would be pus-pus-pusillanimous enough to sit idle in the face of such heinous circumstances. There's a new cuss word to make your hair curl, mother. Puss-pussillanimous! Consarn it, I thought he was callin' the cat when he first sprung it on me."

"I'm shocked to hear such language, Ezra," she said severely. "But did you take it all out in talkin'? Just like you men! Ain't you going to show Mr. Kingsland that he has real, true Christian friends back here in our village?"

"I was comin' to it as fast as I could," returned the deacon, with ruffled mien. "We organized a committee right on the spot, me being chairman *ex officio*, and drummed up volunteers as fast as you could count 'em. There wa'n't no talk of expense—railroad fares be durned, says one and all so hang-fired unanimous you could have heard 'em forty rods. And we're goin' to Spindle Falls fust thing in the morning to offer the minister our support, hook, line, and sinker, amen. Squire Knowlton was for drawin' up a set of resolutions with a preamble an' a hull drove of whereases, but we squelched him by declarin' that actions speak a heap sight louder than words."



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"Well, it will be sort of comfortin' to the minister to see some familiar faces, even if they be kind of homely an' backwoodsy," commented Martha Stiles, ready to exhort this ancient hero of hers to return with his shield or upon it. "I'll fix up a bottle of onion cough syrup an' pack a change of winter flannels, Ezra, an' tell the Ellsworth boys to take good care of you. They ain't more'n fifty, either of 'em, and they're good-hearted an' careful. You tell Mr. Kingsland for me that he'd better come right straight back to Mason Corners an' stay among folks that appreciate him. Teachin' foot-ball! Why, Ezra, it's wuss an' more dangerous than goin' out as a foreign missionary among them poor, benighted heathen Chinamen or Hindoos or darkened cannibals of the South Seas."

"I knowed it was mighty rash an' risky when he told us they was goin' to give him five hundred dollars," sagely agreed the deacon. "That was enough to set me dead ag'in' it. I hope an' pray we arrive in time to protect him before any more of them hostile demonstrations is aimed at him."

With undiminished fire and animation the deacon talked on, while Martha packed his valise and set the table for an early breakfast. And when this worthy couple had made ready for bed, they knelt side by side, and with shining faith and implicit

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conviction that their petitions would be heard, prayed for the welfare of the minister of Mason Corners.

It was afternoon next day when the committee, body-guard, or whatever you may please to call it, filed out of the railroad station at Spindle Falls. The journey had been incredibly long and tedious because of delays at junctions, and the party was weary, dusty, and hungry. The need was too pressing, however, to be delayed for dinner, and, halting only to obtain emergency rations of sandwiches and bananas, the faithful delegation from Mason Corners made for the Jameson College campus by the shortest route. Deacon Ezra half-expected to find George Kingsland perched in the top of a tree with a mob of students yelping for his blood, but the academic grounds were peaceful and almost deserted. By good fortune the passer-by whom Deacon Stiles accosted for information was Arthur Holt, who surveyed the rustic invaders with humorous interest. When he learned the nature of their quest, however, his delight was unbounded, and, shaking hands with each in turn, he cried:

"You are to be my guests, gentlemen. Friends of Mr. Kingsland are true-blue friends of mine. His neighbors and parishioners, too! He is at the football field now, I am quite sure. I am on my way to lecture to one of my classes, but I shall be glad to

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show you the way to the field and will join you a little later."

"Is he all safe and sound? Nothin' more happened to him?" anxiously asked the deacon, while his companions clustered close to Holt as if eager for his response.

"Perfectly safe, and sound as a new dollar," smiled the young professor, his emotions touched by this genuine display of affection and loyalty. "He has made a great many friends in the last few days. Those foolish boys meant to ride him on a rail, but instead of that they rode him straight into popularity. They are in disgrace, their own comrades of Kappa Beta Alpha can't afford to indorse them, and the college does not know quite what to think. In a large measure Mr. Kingsland's popular vindication hangs on the result of the foot-ball season. Youth of the undergraduate age can see no farther than today, gentlemen, and, after all, moral issues are hard to drive home without tangible results."

"Tangible results!" snorted Deacon Ezra Stiles, fanning himself with a high hat of uncertain vintage. "Mr. Kingsland is there every time with the tangible results. Ask any of these men with me. Who made you quit drinking rum, Hank Hosmer, and turned you into a man that stands on his own two feet an' is a credit to his town? Who saved your boy from goin' to the devil, Ed Elisworth, hey?"

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And who was it raised money to buy the widow Harrington a cow an' flock of hens after her barn burned, an' give half the money out of his own pocket? Well, I'll quit clackin'. Stop nudgin' me, Squire. Let's push along an' find this ungodly foot-ball field."

He trudged off with Arthur Holt beside him, the others following sedately, two and two, their faces expressing a dogged gravity of purpose. This singular procession had advanced as far as the gymnasium when, from somewhere beyond its screening walls, there arose a great noise of shouts and cries, mingled with cadenced cheering, which, to unaccustomed ears, sounded like a war-whoop, barbaric, menacing, blood-thirsty. Arthur Holt was about to explain this eruption when Deacon Stiles broke away from him at a sharp trot and valorously charged straight for the scene of disturbance. His long coat-tails fluttered grotesquely, his hat blew off and bounced away unheeded, as he brandished his stout cane on high and cried shrilly:

"Come on, all of you. They're a-killin' our minister. Them's the hostile demonstrations broke loose again wuss'n ever. Don't be a lot of puss-pus-illamicusses. Whoopee!"

Squire Knowlton and others of the more sophisticated, bellowed a stentorian recall, but nothing short of a charge of shot could have halted the flying deacon, and, catching the alarm, the Ellsworth boys,

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Hank Hosmer, and several of the rest took to their heels to re-enforce their ardent leader, who showed every intention of conducting the assault lone-handed. Arthur Holt and the grumbling squire trotted after, unable to intervene, and came in sight of the foot-ball field in time to behold an immensely heroic and dramatic spectacle.

The two elevens were in the thick of a fiercely contested scrimmage, while a throng of students danced like dervishes along the side lines and shouted encouragement with prodigal lung power. The scrubs, led by Kingsland, who was playing at half-back, had battered the 'varsity far down the field, almost within the shadow of the goal posts. A touch-down was imminent. The mighty figure of Josh Yates towered in the scrub rush line, and these two Homeric veterans of other days so bulwarked the strength and strategy of the inferior team that the regulars were facing ignominious defeat.

A crouching quarter-back jabbered a string of numbers; the rush lines heaved and smote each other with a tremendous crash. Down went a trio of tacklers before the momentum of a compact onset of interference. From the fighting, grunting mass a lone figure emerged and dashed down the field, the ball tucked under his arm. After him pounded the straining players of both sides, as if they thirsted for his life. His nose was bleeding, his raiment be-

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smeared with mud. Instead of rushing to help and rescue this poor, hapless fugitive, the on-lookers roared louder than before, in a frenzy of horrible, gloating delight.

Deacon Ezra Stiles shook his fist at these young brutes as he galloped over the turf. Before his very eyes a mob was chasing the minister, who had escaped their clutches for the moment. The victim was still fleeing, but suddenly he seemed to stumble and fall, and a dozen of these murderous ruffians fell upon him headlong and buried him from view. The cries of "Touch-down—touch-down!" meant nothing to the deacon's ears. With astonishing speed he drew near the writhing, tossing heap, the Ellsworth boys and Hank Hosmer lumbering close behind him. Whang! Bang! The hickory cane smote the heads and backs of the minister's foes. Dancing around the edge of the *melée*, the deacon flailed the most convenient anatomies as if he were beating a carpet, while he cried in accents beseeching:

"Kick 'em an' gouge 'em, Parson. Hold out a minute or two an' there'll be more here to help you. Twenty to one, be they? We come just in time. Take that, you rascal. Yank 'em off, Hank. Lend a hand, Ed. Have we got to do it all alone?"

The tangled mass of players scattered with amazing rapidity, escaping this way and that, with excla-

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mations of anguish or wild laughter, some of them rubbing their craniums, others holding their sides as, from a safe distance, they watched their less agile comrades trying to dodge that smarting hickory cane.

George Kingsland crawled to his feet, rubbed the mud from his eyes, blinked at his senior deacon, and sputtered:

"W-what do you think you're doing? My goodness, did they hurt you?"

"Hurt me! I guess not," piped Ezra Stiles, whirling his cane in both hands and glaring to left and right. "Are you all stove up, Parson? Any ribs busted? The passel of young cowards! I made a dozen of 'em squeal and run for dear life. Attackin' you in broad daylight, was they, when you was tryin' to teach 'em foot-ball? Hum-m-m, I learned 'em a few things. Look at 'em. They don't care to touch you again, you bet. Scat, you young varmint! Makin' faces at me an' sneaking up on the parson to ambush him in the back!"

The old gentleman had wheeled and was darting after the scrub quarter-back, who had attempted to ask the coach about placing the ball for the try for goal. Before he could dodge, Deacon Stiles had whacked him under the ear with such vigor that the unfortunate youth sprawled his length, and the crowd cheered vociferously. Josh Yates strode to



"Take that, you rascal."





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the scene of this tragedy, picked up the valiant deacon, tucked him under one arm, and bore him, kicking and fuming, to the nearest bench. Ezra Stiles, for all his unquenchable pugnacity, was a wisp of a man; and Yates handled him with ludicrous nonchalance, as if removing him bodily were the merest trifle.

"There, my fine little gamecock," said his tall captor. "You are out of harm's way here. If you stay on the field you may get broken. Pardon this hasty introduction, but who the devil are you?"

"Who am I?" squeaked Deacon Stiles, trying to squirm from under the ponderous hand of his friendly captor. "Ask the parson. Turn me loose, dog-gone it!"

Kingsland was hastening toward the bench, after delaying to shake the hands of his other parishioners. Pushing Yates aside, he exclaimed, his face beaming with pride and affection:

"My dear friend, Ezra Stiles. Did you really come from Mason Corners to befriend me? And brought all these dear people of mine with you? And you thought I was being pounded to death by those young men in jerseys and moleskins? Bless your old heart, those are my foot-ball players, and they were only playing the game as I have been teaching it to them. I took a hand in the sport to liven up the other side."

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"You were playin' a game?" gasped Deacon Stiles, his eyes popping from his head. "Then what in tarnation was your objections to bein' rode on a rail? I should think you'd prefer it as bein' lots more comfortable than this hellish carnival of assault an' battery that you call foot-ball. So you was really enjoyin' yourself in your innocent, gentle way, and I made a rip-rarin' old fool of myself, hey?"

"No man who tries to stand up for a friend against odds can ever make a fool of himself," answered Kingsland, his hand on the old man's shoulder. "You covered yourself with glory. You put two foot-ball teams to rout, and Mason Corners ought to welcome you home with a brass band and a torchlight parade. Now, you sit here with Mr. Yates while we finish the game, and he will explain it to you. Then we'll all go over to the gymnasium and meet the players. They are friends of mine, too, of just your kind of mettle and devotion, and you will get on famously together."

Deacon Stiles had been painfully cast down by the revelation of his blunder, but Kingsland's speech brought consolation, and he plucked up spirit to crow, like the bantam that he was:

"Well, the hull college saw what I could do if they got after you in dead earnest, didn't they, hey? The Ellsworth boys an' the rest of them will never

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quit laffin' at me, Parson, for leadin' them into this mess. Never mind, I'd rather be chuck full of good intentions than to be a shirker. All right, we'll wait here with Mr. Yates, tho' I ain't squared accounts with him yet for grabbin' me up like I was an infant in arms."

Rather sheepishly the other parishioners from Mason Corners mustered at the call of Deacon Stiles, Squire Knowlton bringing up the rear with an annoying air of rectitude and satisfaction, as if glad that he had washed his hands of this unruly crew before they made donkeys of themselves. Presently scores of students were crowding around the group to scrape acquaintance with Deacon Stiles and to offer admiring congratulations. The news had spread that these were members of the coach's flock, his home guard, and such allegiance was a scathing rebuke to the disaffected undergraduates, many of whom were quick to realize how poor and mean had been their own behavior. By degrees their eyes were being opened to the truth, and they were ready to cheer the new eleven and forget the old, so long as there was promise of ultimate success.

At length the deacon turned from watching the scrimmaging and asked Yates, for he needed not his spectacles to discern a handsome girl as far as the next man:

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"Who is she? I mean the tall, dark-haired one walking across yonder. She holds her head up as if she were a royal princess. I'll bet the price of a good hoss she makes these young students fetch an' carry, hey?"

"Miss Mildred Brewster," replied Yates, with a mischievous smile. "She is the niece of Dean Hemp-hill of the college, that stout gentleman talking with the two young fellows at the end of the grandstand. Deacon Stiles, I want to introduce Miss Brewster to you. Mr. Kingsland admires her very much, and of course she will like to hear anything favorable you can say about him. Shall we move over that way?"

"So the wind is in that quarter, is it?" quoth the deacon, puckering his lips and sounding his tuneless whistle as if surprised. "Our parson is a busy man these days, ain't he? Well, I admire his taste. I don't quite figger how he can expect to marry on th' princely income of the Congregational Church of Mason Corners, but mebbe we can raise him to six hundred next year an' turn the old Pettingill house on Town-house Square into a parsonage. Has the girl got any means?"

"Oh, matters have not progressed as far as all that," laughed Yates. "Their acquaintance consisted largely of turning up their noses at each other until a few days ago. She is the girl who gave me

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warning in time to rescue Mr. Kingsland from the mob that tried to ride him on a rail."

"I want to know! She didn't hate him as much as she thought she did," said the deacon, with the air of a philosopher. "Women are flighty critturs, the best of 'em. Sometimes the surest way to win 'em is to set them dead against you at the start. They turn around later and like you just because they're bound to be contrary. Niece of the Dean—Hemphill, did you say? What's his first name?"

"John, I believe."

"Johnny Hemphill? Flat-foot Johnny Hemphill, of Howland village, Vermont?" queried the deacon. "I wonder if it can be him. I ain't seen him since he was a ragged little shaver runnin' about kind of forlorn with his nose a-needin' wipin' most of the time. I was raised in Howland Village, an' I knew the Hemphills, root an' branch. Johnny's father was always playing in hard luck, an' there was a time when I give him his house rent an' stove wood free, to help him raise his brood of young ones decent. I want to get a squint at this Dean. Why, if I'm right, this Brewster girl is a daughter of one of Johnny's sisters. I wonder which one it could be. The Hemphill women were always fine lookers with lots of git up and git. They outclassed the men. Oh, it's good old stock—no better blood in the State of Vermont. Here comes the girl. Let's ask her."

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Mildred Brewster bowed in response to Yates's greeting, and in her cordial smile there was no trace of resentment because of her unconventional night ride in his automobile. With the sweet graciousness of manner which she knew so well how to assume, she said, as Deacon Stiles paid her homage with a sweeping flourish of his ancient silk hat:

"Mr. Kingsland is to be more than ever congratulated. He is rich in friends, and they all ring as true as steel, Mr. Stiles. I really envy him. Mason Corners must be very proud and fond of their minister when his people are ready to do for him what you did this afternoon."

"God never made a finer man," fervently replied the militant patriarch. "Oh, he has his faults. He ain't showy, and he doesn't waste no breath blowin' his own horn, an' he don't run after the girls—I guess he's a poor hand with 'em—an' he's a fool to stay in Mason Corners amongst us old shellbacks who are payin' him starvation wages. But, barrin' these few weak points, an' his bein' looney enough to teach this kill-'em-an'-eat-'em science of new-fangled manslaughter they call college foot-ball for a cent less than a million dollars a year, Mr. George Kingsland is th' salt of the earth. An' I ain't too tired to take a crack at anybody in Spindle Falls that wants to argue it."

"Some of the college boys have thought him un-

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fair, hot-headed, and bad-tempered," said Mildred Brewster, daring to beard this truculent champion in spite of his threat.

"There, now, I ought to give you a vi'lent answer," cried he. "But I stand disarmed, helpless, and dumfoozled before such a beautiful girl as you are. You don't take no stock in these stories, I'll bet the price of an extry good hoss. You've got good sense as well as good looks; I can see that with both eyes shet tight. By the way, did your uncle, Mr. John Hemphill, live in Howland village when he was a boy?"

"Indeed he did," she exclaimed joyously. "And my home was there when I was a little bit of a girl. My father was a naval officer, and we lived almost everywhere after we left Howland—until I came here to find a home with my aunt and uncle."

"I thought as much," said he, with a falsetto chuckle. "I knew your mother, but I moved to Mason Corners before you were born. And Johnny Hemphill is Dean of Jameson College! Wonders never cease! Flat-footed Johnny, the village cry-baby! I suppose he admires Mr. Kingsland as much as you do, hey?"

This was a catch question, and the shrewd deacon had meant to make it so. Mildred Brewster did not wish to confess open admiration for the head coach, nor did she wish to proclaim her uncle's em-



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bittered hostility toward him. She hesitated, obviously confused, and Ezra Stiles threw back his head and cackled mirthfully before he observed:

"I can see through the hole in a millstone. Your uncle is one of the unconverted, Mildred Brewster. Better talk to him, hadn't I? I ain't afraid to speak up to him an' sass him good and plenty. I gathered from the dratted piece in the newspaper that he had taken holt of this ruction by the wrong end. I'll make him drop it. Where is he?"

Deacon Stiles whirled about and glared at the spot where the Dean had been last seen, but he had left the field and unwittingly escaped the onslaught of a formidable adversary, who was bound to keep to the war-path so long as there remained one solitary foe of his beloved minister. Miss Brewster appeared considerably relieved that this meeting had been postponed, and ingenuously confessed, to the honest delight of Josh Yates, arch abettor of the sentimental fortunes of the coach:

"I ought to be angry, I suppose, Deacon Stiles, at hearing you speak of my esteemed uncle in such a scandalous manner. But I hope you do talk right up to him 'good and plenty.' I begin to think he deserves it, but I haven't the courage to tell him so."

"Kingsland's stock went jumping up toward par that time," said Yates to himself. "'I'll bet the

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price of an extry good hoss' that when I tell him what she said he goes to see her this evening."

The foot-ball players were departing from the field with lagging gait, and Kingsland waved his hand at the trio as he led his squad toward the gymnasium. He wished to be clean and clad aright before daring to speak to his goddess, and Deacon Stiles read his thoughts as he wisely remarked:

"He wants to get out of them wild man's clothes fust. I don't blame him a mite. If I'd ever gone a-courtin' Martha Stiles in a riggin' like that, she'd ha' slammed th' door on me and whistled for the dog."

This outspoken comment was in the nature of a bomb-shell. Mildred Brewster's face was rosy red as she hastily said her adieus, while the deacon gazed after her and observed to Yates:

"She ain't as mad as she looks. I might as well make a little hay for Mr. Kingsland wherever the mowin' is good. That's what I'm here fo'."

They went to the gymnasium and rejoined the other delegates from Mason Corners, who were viewing the athletic trophies displayed on the walls and discussing the singular game of foot-ball as it had appealed to their several tastes. Before long the players emerged from the dressing-rooms looking so fresh and wholesome and respectable in their street garb that Deacon Stiles voiced the opinion of his friends as he threw up his hands and cried:

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"Why, they look as nice and harmless as a Sunday-school class! My stars, I thought Mr. Kingsland kept 'em on raw meat an' red pepper when they wan't rampagin' up an' down the field seekin' whom they may devour."

Yates presented each athlete in turn to the visitors from Mason Corners, and the repentant Deacon Stiles flushed guiltily as he noted several welts on cheek and forehead where his hickory cane had left its mark. So contrite were his apologies that the young men, who bore him no ill whatever, were moved to protestations almost tearful, and swore that it was honor indeed to be scarred in such a noble cause. Josh Yates cheered the occasion by inviting the Mason Corners delegation to supper at the training table, "to see the animals fed." A messenger was sent to summon Arthur Holt, and the company moved upon the hotel in a solid body, every guest linked arm in arm with a stalwart foot-ball player. Joshua Yates had a persuasive way with him, and at his majestic mandate the landlord and his staff bustled to and fro and made room for the strangers at the foot-ball table. Deacon Ezra Stiles said grace by special request of the coach, the long rows of young men standing with bowed heads, after which they fell to with such astounding havoc that Ezra asked earnestly:

"You don't have to feed the critturs out of your

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wages as foot-ball teacher, do you, Mr. Kingsland? Talk about little boys with hollow legs! I never see the beat of this. We think Hank Hosmer is a hearty feeder at church sociables and harvest suppers, but he's puny an' ailin' beside these famine-breeders of yourn. Even that little sawed-off over yonder, that you call th' quarter-back, is holdin' up his end with the rest of 'em. He may be only one-quarter back, but the balance of him is all stummick, sure as you are born."

Murchison, the red-headed little quarter-back, grinned as if he enjoyed this notoriety, little reckoning that thereafter he was to be known on the campus as "All-Stummick Jim."

Kingsland had weeded his material even better than he knew. This picked squad had something more than pluck and muscle to recommend it. Every man of them had done what he thought was right, not what he thought was easy or popular. The average of their moral courage was exceedingly high. They had followed the leader of what seemed like a lost cause, recognizing the elemental fact that principle was worth fighting for. Their faces were stamped with this sterling quality of character. They were only foot-ball players, it is true, as yet unacquainted with the deeper, larger currents of life, but athletics had helped make men of them for all that. Kingsland looked at them and his heart

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rejoiced. His work had been good. He was having his reward, and that abundantly, and no other kind of success was worth striving for. He was conscious of a yearning to give his life to this kind of service, not as a foot-ball coach, but in intimate touch with young men on the threshold of life. He knew them, he was still one of them, and, please God, his influence should grip and hold them aright.

Squire Knowlton, a stalwart pillar of a man, slow of speech, wise without displaying it, leaned across the table and whispered behind his hand:

"You ought to be proud of these boys of yours, Mr. Kingsland. They will be a power in college as long as they are here, and your influence will survive through them, you mark my word. Every lad of them looks as if he could say at the end of his foot-ball season, 'I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith.'"

"Sturdy boys; yes, they are," said the coach, very softly. "I hope they won't forget me. I wish I might stay with them."

"As pastor of a Spindle Falls church?" quickly asked the squire, with a troubled cloud on his stern face. "You don't think of leaving us, do you?"

"No, I have not thought of it. Besides, the only church here which the college boys attend is in capable hands. The pastor is an old college class-

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mate of mine, Jared Whittaker. He is far more brilliant than I. I am not dissatisfied with Mason Corners, Squire. I love my people and my work."

The serious trend of this conversation was diverted by loud cries of "Speech!" "Speech!" "Speech from Deacon Stiles." "We must have Deacon Stiles and the hickory stick." The old gentleman blithely arose, waved his napkin to restore order, and proceeded to grant the urgent pleas of the company after this fashion:

"They say there's no fool like an old fool. Mebbe so, boys. College foot-ball wasn't part of a classical eddication when I was young. When the blacksmith, who was the strongest man in our village, got pickled on hard cider, and enjoyed himself by standin' peaceful citizens on their heads, the constable, which was me, got out a posse and run him in and the squire bound him over to keep the peace. Nowadays, fur's I'm able to discover, he'd be a hero in a college, and the more he run amuck the more popular he'd make himself. I ain't quite used to seein' a minister of the gospel pickin' up boys with dotin' mothers at home, an' rammin' them into the sod or tossin' 'em over his shoulder in hopes he can fracture their skulls; but lemme tell you, if Mr. Kingsland says it's good for 'em, I ain't going to argue the matter. And you boys don't seem to bear him no hard feelin'. The funny part

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of it to me is that the boys that hate him most is the ones he won't let play foot-ball.

"I was mad clear through this afternoon, but you are as forgivin' a lot of youngsters as ever I see, an' here we are havin' a love feast that makes me feel good clear down to my toes. I dunno as I ever see but one man madder than I was when I lit after you young rascals and walloped you. His name was Jonas Potter, an' he lived on a back road of Mason Corners. He was a close-fisted, mean-tempered old coot, an' his brother Hezekiah, who lived alone on the next farm, was as like him as two peas in a pod.

"This Hezekiah up and died one day, and the funeral was held at Jonas's house, as the proper thing to do. Jonas and Hezekiah had quarrelled all their born days, and the mournin' of the survivin' brother wasn't expected to be toomultuous. But when his friends tromped through the best parlor to take a last look at the remains, Jonas was a-takin' on and lamentin' most astonishin'. Folks began to think they hadn't given him credit for so much tender feelin's, and was mighty sorry for him. Jonas kept it up all the way to the buryin' ground, as if his heart was broke, an' his grief was turrible to behold. Finally a sympat<sup>h</sup>-izin' neighbor says: 'It is a great loss an' a sore affliction, Jonas; but all flesh is grass, an' you must hold fast to the blessed promise of a shinin' hereafter.'

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"Jonas wiped his streamin' eyes and replied in tremblin' accents, which was kind of peevish and hostile: 'Tain't that. Tain't that at all. They made a mistake when they laid him out, an' they went and buried Hezekiah in my best black Sunday coat!'"

Deacon Stiles sat down amid hilarious applause, and a graceless end rush, with a pleasing tenor voice, was inspired to lead a roaring chorus to the air of "The Blue Canary Isles":

They buried Brother Hezekiah  
In Brother Jonas's coat.  
It was a wasteful thing to do  
To Brother Jonas's coat.

"The pesky young scalawags," chuckled Deacon Stiles, with a beaming countenance.

The merry-minded athletes, forgetting all the stress and worry of the field, entertained their guests with rollicking songs of the campus, and were tune-fully proclaiming that "The shades of night were falling fast, up-i-dee, up-i-da," when the landlord entered the dining-room and beckoned Kingsland to the door. The coach vanished into the "office" and was absent for some time. When he reappeared it was plain to read in his manner that he bore tidings of serious import. Raising a hand for silence, he said from his place at the head of the table:



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"You will have to excuse me, gentlemen. Yates, will you look after our guests from Mason Corners and see that they find comfortable rooms in the hotel? I may not be back until late. Pumpelly, I want you to go along with me."

Deacon Stiles was perturbed. He scented danger and was on his feet in an instant with the excited query:

"Any hostile demonstrations broke loose, Mr. Kingsland? You look sort of nervous an' solemn all of a sudden. Don't you want us to go with you. That's what we're here for."

The deacon's distress and anxiety were reflected in the faces of his friends, and Kingsland, who was a poor hand at subterfuge, thought best to take the company into his confidence and have done with it.

"I am going to see the Dean," said he. "He has decided to take the foot-ball situation into his own hands. It seems that he is the final authority in matters of college discipline. By a strict ruling this empowers him to forbid a student to play foot-ball if, in his opinion, such a disciplinary measure is necessary. I have just been informed that the Dean intends to forbid every one of you fellows to play foot-ball for the rest of the season. This means that the team will be abolished, disbanded—call it whatever you like."

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A storm of indignant clamor swept the long table. The news was incredible. It was a thunderbolt launched from skies which had appeared to be rapidly clearing. With a clatter of chairs the players crowded forward. All tried to talk at once, beseeching the coach to tell them more. He tried to assume a more cheerful manner and went on to say:

"The death warrant has not been signed as yet, and while there is life there is hope. Perhaps I can persuade the Dean to give our side a fair hearing. I don't understand it. We are not endangering discipline in any way. Somehow he has taken it into his head to punish the wrong people. I want you fellows to keep your mouths shut and go about your business. Not a word about this, mind you. I will see you here at breakfast. Come on, Pumpelly, I want you with me as captain."

"But where do we come in?" cried Deacon Stiles, dodging out from behind Yates's broad back. "I aimed to call on Johnny Hemphill myself. Just you let me back him into a corner and tell him what's what. We're going with you, Mr. Kingsland, and you can't shake us. Hold the fort is our motto, an' this fine crowd of foot-ballers of yourn ain't goin' to be disbanded without Johnny Hemphill hears from us, you can bet the price of a blamed good hoss on it."

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Kingsland smiled and made no protest. The body-guard from Mason Corners, weary but undismayed, advanced as one man and followed the coach and the captain from the hotel.

## CHAPTER XIII

### HOW THE DEAN WAS ROUTED

ON their way to the home of the Dean, Joseph Pumpelly asked the question which lay heavy on his mind:

"Who was it that came to the hotel and gave you the tip just now, Mr. Kingsland? I don't want to be fresh, but it was a queer performance. It—it—wasn't Miss Brewster coming to the rescue again, was it?"

"No, Joseph, it was not. Angels' visits do not happen as often as that. You could not guess in a week. It was Lawrence Martin."

"Lawrence Martin!" gasped Joseph, as if Kingsland had named Old Nick himself. "He came to the hotel to do you a good turn?"

"Partly that, strange as it sounds. He is not as bad as he has been painted. At least, he has the grace to know when he is whipped. It seems that the Dean told him that I had interceded for him and refused to appear against him after he and his friends waylaid me on the river road. It made a

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good deal of an impression on him, and he was considerably ashamed of himself as far as I could gather from what he had to say. Martin talked his troubles over with Miss Brewster, and she—and she advised him to be frank and straight with me as the only decent course. He was sort of squaring accounts in his own way by giving me this information to-night.”

“So Miss Brewster was behind it,” said the ingenuous Joseph. “Golly, she must have a pretty high opinion of you! So Martin told you that the Dean intended to disband the foot-ball team? There must have been a secret faculty meeting.”

“Yes, Martin got wind of it in the Dean’s office. If there was a student committee in conference with the faculty, as the Dean suggested at the mass-meeting, it must have been packed by the fraternity crowd. We should have known nothing whatever about it but for Lawrence Martin.”

“And Miss Mildred Brewster,” sagaciously added Joseph. “She is certainly a whole team.”

The coach was not compelled to pass comment upon this eulogy, for the party had come to the lawn in front of the Dean’s comfortable-looking dwelling, and Deacon Ezra Stiles tiptoed forward to whisper:

“Hadn’t we better tromp right in with you? Not that your backbone needs stiffenin’, but in Civil

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War time we used to talk about carrying the inimy's position by sheer weight of numbers."

"I see no objection to your strategy," answered the coach. "I have nothing to say in secret, and perhaps I had better have a cloud of witnesses. Pumpelly and I will lead the way."

Tramp, tramp, the feet of the procession resounded upon the strip of concrete pavement that led to the front door. The noise led the Dean himself to open the sacred portal, and he stood blinking out into the darkness, at a loss for words until the figure of Kingsland in the lighted foreground of the singular picture made him exclaim:

"Ah-h, do you wish to see me, sir? I am to be found at my office from nine to four. If your business is pressing, however——"

"Very much so," said Kingsland, advancing, unchecked by this rebuff. "May we come in, if you please? You have not asked to hear my views of the foot-ball situation, and I think they may be worth a little of your time."

Deacon Stiles and the Ellsworth boys were uneasily pressing forward to hear what was said, and the Dean fell back with no great cheerfulness. In silence the coach and the captain entered the hall, and stood rather awkwardly until the Dean showed the way into the library, bowing with ironical courtesy and pompous front. Outwardly the least con-

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cerned was Deacon Stiles, who was looking about him with the liveliest curiosity until he chanced to remark to himself quite audibly:

"Who'd ever thought that little 'Flat-foot Johnny' Hemphill, the cry-baby of Howland village, would have as grand a home as this an' be swellin' himself up like my turkey-cock? The Lord moves in mysterious ways His wonders to perform; an' a truer sayin' was never writ."

The Dean started and glared angrily, but the speaker was eclipsed behind Joseph Pumpelly and there followed a congealed yet eloquent silence. Kingsland kept a straight face and, anxious to ruffle his host no more than was necessary, addressed him with marked deference as follows:

"You may have seen these good friends of mine at the foot-ball field this afternoon, Mr. Hemphill. I want you to know that I had nothing whatever to do with their visit to the college. They insisted that they be allowed to come here this evening, and I could not very well refuse their company. My chief errand is to ask you a fair question. Is the Jameson College foot-ball team, Captain Joseph Pumpelly, in danger of faculty interference? Do you disapprove of the team as at present organized and handled?"

The Dean stood in front of a fireplace, his hands clasped behind his back, facing the coach; but his

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eyes wandered to scrutinize the pert figure of Deacon Ezra Stiles, who had dropped into the most comfortable chair to be found and was listening with his head cocked on one side like a bright-eyed old bird.

"This is not Mason Corners, Mr. Kingsland," replied the Dean, with explosive energy. "You have attempted to meddle with the affairs of this college as if it were your little backwoods parish. You are the kind of reformer who works more mischief than good. You were hired to coach foot-ball, not to interfere with the morals and manners of fraternity houses, class-rooms, campus, and what not. Other foot-ball coaches in the employ of this college have minded their own business, and I have had no fault to find with their methods. The intrusion of your insolent friend Yates was absolutely unpardonable. He has made matters worse than they were before. He is paying the expenses of your team, feeding them, buying them uniforms, until it is his and your eleven; in fact, not an organization belonging to Jameson College at all. I do not approve of the behavior of the young men who assaulted you. But they had a certain measure of provocation. I speak plainly because you see fit to demand an explanation."

"And what is the result of your investigation?" mildly inquired the coach.

"If you are permitted to continue your policy until



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the end of the season, sir, the college is bound to be torn by dissensions that will subvert discipline, seriously affect the work of the class-rooms, and leave a lamentable train of ill-feeling for the faculty to combat. If your team loses its championship game, the students who are loyal to Captain Martin will consider themselves vindicated. On the other hand, if your team wins, your arbitrary, interfering, tyrannical methods as a coach will appear to have been justified, and the students, who are so many weather-cocks, will clamor for your return next year. And I do not wish to face this latter possibility. Jameson had better do without more foot-ball for the present, Mr. Kingsland. Your contract will be fulfilled so far as salary is concerned, but I shall dismiss from college any student who plays hereafter on a so-called 'varsity eleven. You have made a nightmare for me of your foot-ball team."

The room was hushed after this intemperate harangue. Kingsland was staggered by the exhibition of savage hostility. It was apparent that the Dean was unaware of the recent shifting of campus opinion toward the coach and his team and his policy, or he was deliberately ignoring it. The man was blinded by his swollen self-sufficiency and pride of power. And he was embittered, furthermore, by the disgrace and ridicule that had overtaken his own nephew, Lawrence Martin, and he held Kingsland

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indirectly responsible. At a venture the coach suggested, with no show of resentment:

"About Martin, I did not want to see him punished, Mr. Hemphill. You know that very well. There is the making of a fine man in him if he is handled right. He is sorry he plotted against me. Ask him yourself. He lost his head. Don't class him with Jerry Hanscom, who ought to be kicked out of college. He is a pernicious influence in his fraternity chapter house. Martin fought me in the open, most of the time. Hanscom worked in the dark, like a sneaking coward that he is."

"I am astonished to hear you speak so favorably of Lawrence Martin, very much astonished," quoth the Dean, with slightly less asperity. "I confess that I am very fond of him. But his case does not affect the main issue. Mr. Kingsland"—the heavy voice grew harsh—"you have made much of your influence for good as applied to foot-ball training. Yet you have sown seeds of anger, hatred, rebellion in this college. You came to us as a clergyman, which makes your behavior most extraordinarily incongruous. I presume that these gentlemen from Mason Corners have come to testify to your good character. But we have here, in our own community, a gentleman of the highest standing, who has known you for many years, our own beloved clergyman, the Reverend Jared Whittaker. He was with you in college

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and the Divinity School. Why has he not come forward in your behalf? Why has he not invited you to occupy his pulpit? Why does he give me the impression, although he has the greatest reluctance to testify against you, that my position has been right? I am bound to say that he has influenced me. He is not numbered among these clamorous defenders of yours, Mr. Kingsland. Why not?"

Kingsland was no longer looking at the Dean. He was staring at the wide doorway opening from the hall as if he beheld a vision. Mildred Brewster had come, unheralded, to hear the conclusion of her uncle's eulogy of Jared Whittaker. She was dressed in white, and very lovely she was to look at, with her eyes shining like stars, her coloring rich and warm, and her coronet of dusky hair. Unabashed and smiling, she said, with just a trace of contempt in her voice:

"Why not ask him, Uncle John? He has just come in to honor me with a call."

"Mr. Whittaker is in the house?" exclaimed the Dean. "Why, of course, ask him to come in. His presence is most fortunate. He will help me to thresh out this painful matter to its conclusion."

She turned from the door and with mocking sweetness said to her unseen visitor:

"The Dean and Mr. Kingsland will be delighted to see you in the library, Mr. Whittaker. My loss will be their gain, I am quite sure."

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Mr. Whittaker seemed in no hurry to obey, and he did not appear happy when he entered the library with dragging step. To add to his discomfiture, Mildred Brewster persisted in remaining as a spectator. His airy confidence of manner was badly shaken. The shadow of fear was upon his sallow face, physical fear that unnerves and inspires contempt, most of all in a woman's eyes. He was caught between the upper and the nether millstones. He had not been true to himself, and this knowledge took away his strength. Nor had he realized how far pride and ambition, and now jealousy, had led him astray from the path he had sworn to follow all his days.

Kingsland looked at him more in sorrow than in anger, and said:

"Well, Whittaker, you never approved of me, did you? But do you think you have been playing fair? Did you try to find out what I was fighting for here at the college? Did you want to find out? Did you ever give me the benefit of the doubt, even in the old days at New Haven? I want to hear what you have been telling the Dean to make me out unfit to coach the foot-ball team."

Grasping the obvious fact that his ally had become weak-kneed, the puzzled Dean made haste to declaim assuringly:

"Do not be browbeaten, Mr. Whittaker. These

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friends of Mr. Kingsland have no voice. This matter is solely between you and me. Do you mind repeating your references to Mr. Kingsland's infirmities of temperament and lack of ability to instruct young men in the way they should go?"

"I—I never said that he was not honest and sincere," stammered the miserable Whittaker. "His parishioners will doubtless tell you of his many sterling qualities of heart and mind. I—I don't know that I ever criticised him adversely—that is, in any hostile spirit. His views of practical theology and applied ethics do not agree with mine in some essential particulars, and—and his——"

"I said nothing about theology and ethics," growled the Dean, who was primed with the courage of his convictions and was, at present, of the aggressive order of antagonist. "Are you not feeling well, Mr. Whittaker? You are looking uncommonly pale. Do you or do you not approve of Mr. Kingsland as a man and a coach? I am so very positive that you have shown a consistent disapproval that your hesitation and embarrassment perplex me."

"Don't lose your nerve, Whittaker," said Kingsland, with a cheery grin. "I may be brutal but you are perfectly safe. This is what we used to call in our slangy college days 'a show-down.' I forgot, though, you never used slang. If you had, you might understand me when I tell you that you are a rank quitter."

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Jared's thin shoulders were drooping, his gaze was downward, and his fingers picked at the buttons of his coat. He was not as guilty as he appeared, but he felt powerless to defend himself. He could not see Mildred Brewster, but he knew that she was regarding him as something mean and vile. Perhaps she had set this trap for him. He was surprised at his own lack of courage. A bold front, a ready response, and the crisis would be passed. But his will seemed to be crippled. Of a truth, conscience had made a coward of him. As if the words came from a far corner of the room, he heard himself saying in a thin, uncertain voice:

"I have nothing to tell you against George Kingsland; nothing at all, Mr. Hemphill. I can no longer bear witness against him."

So saying Jared Whittaker stumbled from the room, brushed past the girl and saw her not, caught up his coat and hat with unsteady hands, and departed out of the house. Mildred Brewster forsook her station in the doorway, and with light foot-fall passed into the library and sat herself down on a divan beside Deacon Ezra Stiles as if she were now bound to play a part in this dramatic conference. Kingsland welcomed this act of overt alliance with adoring, grateful eyes, and she smiled at him a little wistfully as if regretting some deeds and thoughts of her own.

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The Dean was much shaken. One of his main props had been knocked from under him without warning. His heavy face was brooding and distraught as he gazed into space and wondered what ought to be said in such acutely trying circumstances. Just then Deacon Stiles shattered the weighty silence with this high-keyed soliloquy:

"Well, well, how has the mighty fallen! So that's the minister the Spindle Falls committee went away to New Haven to pick out for 'em, an' shoved George Kingsland off onto us Mason Corners' folks as second choice. I wouldn't trust that committee to buy me a settin' hen if that wobbly imitation of a Whittaker man is their fust choice. Seems to me Mason Corners got the best of the deal. It's about time you was thinkin' so, too, Johnny Hemphill. Goin' to bust into tears about your dear Mr. Whittaker, same as when your little wooden cart got broke or them Parlin boys throwed rocks at your pet rooster? Got a minister to mend this time, hain't ye?"

The Dean grew red, then purple, and his mouth hung open as he blinked at the white-whiskered little man perched upon the divan who was beaming at him with the utmost enjoyment.

"Don't remember Ezra Stiles, do ye?" chirped the deacon, taking pity on the other's dumfounded amazement. "Yep, I've changed some in the last

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forty years, Johnny. I was the best friend your father and mother had when you and your flock of sisters and brothers was little tads in Howland village. You've growed some, too, Johnny."

Be it said to the credit of John Hemphill that, with all the bigotry of the self-made man greatly pleased with his own handiwork, a lively sense of gratitude was among his worthy qualities. The words of Deacon Stiles recalled to his mind a picture somewhat blurred by the far perspective of the years—the picture of a hale young farmer and his apple-cheeked wife who had been the mainstay and comfort of his parents through times of adversity. The memories thus revived made the expression of his countenance become milder and more gentle in the most curious way, as if he were thawing in spite of himself. Lumbering across the room, he held out his hand to the deacon and said, with a chuckle positively boyish:

"Yes, I am 'Flat-foot Johnny' Hemphill, the village cry-baby, Uncle Ezra. We children always called you Uncle Ezra, you know. My father used to talk of you with tears in his eyes, long after we had moved away from Howland. And you have been living in Mason Corners, only thirty miles from here? And your wife? Aunt—Aunt—Mary—no—Aunt Martha it was. Is she there, too?"

"You just bet she's all there, an' ruling the roost



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same as she has always done," cried Ezra Stiles. "We don't hear much about the college over in our neck of the woods. The few boys of our town that has had enough git-up-and-git mostly went to the State University. Well, Johnny, it's a sort of painful and het-up occasion that brings us together in this reunion celebration, ain't it? Your father thought my word was as good as my bond any day in the week. If my reputation as a man of good judgment and sound intentions ain't outlawed, you'd better talk to *me* about Mr. George Kingsland. I ain't biased by no foot-ball microbes, and these friends of mine are considered sane in our town. Squire Knowlton has been to the legislature, and is wuth forty thousand dollars if he's wuth a red cent. The rest of 'em is honest and well-to-do church members, every man of 'em. Our word is as good, I kal'late, as the tremblin' accents of that minister of yourn who skedaddled as if he had somethin' heavy on his mind. This ain't a question of foot-ball. It's a question of a *man*, and don't you forget it, Johnny Hemphill."

The Dean was conscious of an odd sensation. He was not quite sure of himself. This was unprecedented. He actually blushed as it came back to him, in a flash of memory, that this domineering little old gentleman had once spanked him with no soft hand for letting the chickens loose in the kitchen garden. In the light of the deacon's immortal attack on the

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foot-ball squad, he was capable of trying to spank him again if argument proved futile. The desertion of Jared Whittaker had been a shock. The interposition of Deacon Stiles was in the nature of an earthquake.

To complicate the situation in which the Dean thus found himself, Mildred Brewster was fairly making love to the deacon, smiling gleefully at his spirited sallies, shamelessly patting his hand by way of encouragement, and whispering in his gallantly attentive ear as if openly to proclaim herself allied with the opposition. The Dean had a high regard for her opinion when it happened to coincide with his own. Of late she had been silent when he declaimed in his stormy way against the head coach, no longer voicing her agreement with his headstrong verdicts. So she had turned traitor in his own household!

If the hapless Dean was bewildered by this wholesale alignment against him, George Kingsland was even more confused by the very presence of his friends in such overwhelming force. The conduct of his defence had been taken out of his hands, and he felt awkwardly reluctant to say anything more in his own behalf. He wished with all his heart that he might quit the conference, leaving Deacon Stiles to tell the Dean whatever was in his mind to say. Mildred Brewster, with sympathetic intuition, guessed what was troubling the mind of the coach,

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and admired him the more for the very genuine quality of his native modesty. In order to extricate him as gracefully as possible, she suggested:

"My aunt, Mrs. Hemphill, will be delighted to see you, Mr. Kingsland, if you can be excused for a little while. Your friends from Mason Corners will entertain my uncle, I am sure."

Kingsland thanked her and made for the hall with a noticeable air of relief, pausing to say to Joseph Pumpelly:

"You can answer any questions about the management of the team. The Dean knows how much your class thinks of you, I take it for granted."

"I'll do my best, sir," replied the blushing captain.

Mildred waited in the parlor across the hall, seemingly in no great haste to summon Mrs. Hemphill. Kingsland went close to her and boldly caught her hand in his, and thus they stood for a moment while he said:

"I simply have to shake hands with you. I want to thank you with all my heart for ceasing to dislike me. And have you really come over to my side, Miss Brewster?"

"The battle is to the strong," she responded. "I beg of you to forgive me for misunderstanding you. You had so few friends at court, and, like poor Jared Whittaker, I drifted with the majority. A college world is very small and cramped, Mr. Kingsland,

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and it is not always easy to keep one's vision clear and unbiased. There, I have made my confession, and I feel better for it."

"I—I—feel as if I knew you awfully well," he faltered, "although, as Josh Yates puts it in his breezy fashion, our acquaintance has mostly consisted in making faces at each other. So you think I am going to win my foot-ball fight in the end? You haven't given me any reason for saying so, but—but—I have found something and somebody infinitely more worth fighting for."

This was so much more than Mildred had bargained for that she straightway fled the field, while Kingsland stood smiling inanely at the wall in front of him. From the library came the rumble of the Dean's voice and the vivacious chatter of Ezra Stiles in a kind of muffled duet, as if they were having at each other, hammer and tongs, but Kingsland heard it not. His matter-of-fact imagination had been given wings to soar in a new world of dreams and aspirations all aglow with the splendor of the light that never was on land or sea.

It might have been minutes or hours, for all he knew, when Mildred returned and he found himself talking rather absently to the timid little woman who had the great good fortune to be her aunt. Mrs. Hemphill walked in fear of her lord; this was to be read in her self-effacing demeanor; but she had

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formed her own conclusions concerning the head coach, and the bracing presence of Mildred gave her courage to say:

"I know nothing about foot-ball, really, and you must pardon my ignorance, but I have been greatly interested in your difficulties. My husband has tried to enlighten me from time to time, yet I am afraid I have paid more heed to my niece and to my nephew, Lawrence Martin. You seem to be fast converting them to your cause. Lawrence seems ashamed of having been your enemy since you showed such a forgiving spirit toward the poor boy."

"He will come out all right. He fell into poor company for a while," replied the coach. "He will be one of the best men of his fraternity before he finishes college."

"Have you discussed matters with President Stellwagon?" she asked. "He is quite feeble, I know, and rather leaves college affairs to Mr. Hemphill, so far as control of the students is concerned."

"I assumed as much. No, I have met him only once. I am very anxious to set myself right with him before I leave Jameson. He impressed me as a man of rare sweetness of character."

"I have talked with him recently," said Mildred, now frankly partisan and not in the least ashamed of it. "I told him he was a dear old thing but that

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I couldn't be fond of him any longer unless he put Uncle John in his place for once."

"Why, Mildred, I am shocked," exclaimed her aunt.

"Oh, he was not in the least offended. He still thinks of me as a snip of a girl, but he promised to confer with Uncle John to-morrow, just to get rid of me, I presume."

Kingsland was quite breathless. It was almost impossible of comprehension that she, whom he had so hopelessly regarded from afar off, was now in the van of his defenders. He wanted to tell her many and more intimate things, but the time was not yet come. At length he bethought himself of the Dean and the strange council in the library and came down to earth. The argument behind closed doors was waxing warmer, and several voices were heard at once, as if the hard pressed Dean had been brought to bay by a general attack. Kingsland became anxious and conversation lagged. At last the library door opened and Joseph Pummelly emerged, his amiable lineaments expanded in a prodigious grin. The coach stole into the hall, and the Freshman captain hoarsely confided:

"Old Hemphill has no chance at all. Deacon Stiles won't let go, and the squire is waked up and is going strong. Mason Corners doesn't know how to spell quit. They are ready to make an all-night

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session of it. The Dean has finished with me, and he was as meek as Moses. I nearly fell off my chair. I'm going to bed. That circus won't finish before midnight, and you don't catch me sitting up and breaking training rules."

"Anything more I can do?" asked the coach.

"Not a thing. Your case is in good hands. The Dean is on the run. He jumps if Deacon Stiles pokes a finger at him. I gave it to him good and straight about how the best men in college have felt for the last week or two, and he listened just as if I were a human being. He isn't going to disband our foot-ball team. He hasn't got the nerve."

"I am inclined to think you are speaking facts, Joseph. I will go along with you and see that the boys are all in bed on time. Probably they will hang around the hotel waiting for me. They will not think of going to sleep until I carry them some kind of news from here. Wait until I say good-night, and tell the deacon to meet me at the hotel."

Mildred was so eager to hear the report wafted from beyond the portal by Joseph that the coach lingered to tell her of his bright hopes that all was well with the Jameson eleven.

"What have I told you?" she cried triumphantly to her agitated aunt. "Uncle John needs a strong hand to bring him to terms. Take this lesson to heart, and whenever he tries to play the czar just

## HOW THE DEAN WAS ROUTED

threaten to send for Deacon Ezra Stiles and he will cower under the nearest table."

Turning to Kingsland, she said with confidence, complete, adorable:

"Of course there will be a foot-ball team and you will teach it how to win the great game against Wiloughby. If there is anything left of Uncle John after to-night I shall take him in hand myself."

"I shall try my best to win," gravely replied the coach, gazing into her eyes with thoughts of another and dearer kind of endeavor and a far more precious reward than that of the foot-ball field.



## CHAPTER XIV

### KINGSLAND'S VINDICATION

As if the fates fought in favor of the Jameson eleven, Captain Joseph Pumpelly and his men won their next game, the first victory of the season, against a college team from Massachusetts which had expected to do as it pleased with the greenhorns. College opposition became perceptibly weakened by this feat at arms, and its echoes may have carried as far as the office of the Dean. Those who consulted him on campus business noted that his manner was not as imperious as of yore, and he even gave heed to the other side of the argument, no matter what the topic might be, a display of sweet reasonableness hitherto unknown. Deacon Ezra Stiles and his gallant band had departed for Mason Corners after bidding cordial farewell and godspeed to the football players, one by one, and promising to return to see the Willoughby game. The deacon's valedictory to the coach was something like this:

"Now, if Johnny Jump-up Hemphill shows any signs of gettin' fractious, just you telegraph me, an'

## KINGSLAND'S VINDICATION

I'll bet the price of a good hoss that I can make him lay down and play dead within one hour after I hit this town again. About the girl, I dunno. She's wuth fightin' for, George, an' it looks to me as if you had spiked the guns of the rest of the suitors, Jared Whittaker included. I'll be prayin' for ye, an' so will Martha. An' when you come back to us the church committee will see about raisin' your salary an' fixin' up a parsonage, if you're really and truly goin' to need it."

Kingsland breathed easier after he had put this outspoken champion on a railroad train. He was a mighty help in some ways, but in the very delicate matter of courtship he resembled a bomb-shell with a sputtering fuse. The coach tried bravely to banish distracting thoughts, and focused his energy on the task of preparing his eleven for the final days of the season. The news from Willoughby was disquieting in the extreme. This rival team was heavily ballasted with veteran material and had played through the most successful season in its history, with the Jameson contest less than a fortnight away. There was both weight and speed in the rush line and among the backs, it was reported, and the eleven as a fighting unit had shown no lack of staying power.

Such tidings as this made Kingsland more and more uneasy, and at length he slipped quietly away for a day to watch the enemy at close range. This

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scouting expedition confirmed what he had heard. Willoughby was to be feared at every point, and the only hope of defeating her lay in hard, skilful coaching and the most self-sacrificing efforts on the part of the Jameson men. Their chief strength, however, was in Kingsland's own indomitable spirit, which pervaded his team through and through and kept them stout-hearted in the face of every discouragement.

The inexhaustible good spirits and jovial presence of Joshua Yates played no small part in keeping the players in fine fettle. At the training table he was a beaming behemoth of a host who seemed no older than the lads that laughed at his stories. Little cared he that the assets of the athletic treasury were too slender to support the training table. He was getting his money's worth in the companionship of these tried men and true, and he was doing a favor for George Kingsland. His touring car and imported Henri became familiar features of the college landscape. They belonged to his armament of conquest. Naturally enough, he persuaded Mrs. Hemphill and Mildred to accompany him in luxurious rides over the autumn countryside, far and near. And Kingsland joined them without coercion when his afternoon's task was done. The Dean, however, proved obdurate, and Yates sighed and shook his head as if this defeat grieved and surprised him."

## KINGSLAND'S VINDICATION

"I thought he was coming around very nicely," Josh confided to Kingsland. "But he is still inclined to be snippy with me. I wish you would kindly send him word that Deacon Stiles is expected in town. Ten to one Uncle Johnny Hemphill would try to borrow my automobile to escape in. By the way, have you seen the Dean lately?"

"Um-m-m! I have happened to call at his house several evenings, but he did not show himself," naïvely confessed the coach.

"Oh, he is too cowed to start a rebellion in his own house. As long as he doesn't forbid her to see you, you are doing well and going strong, George. If you win the Willoughby game he will fall on your saintly neck with cries of joy. He is a good deal more of a man than Jared Whittaker, but he, too, likes popularity."

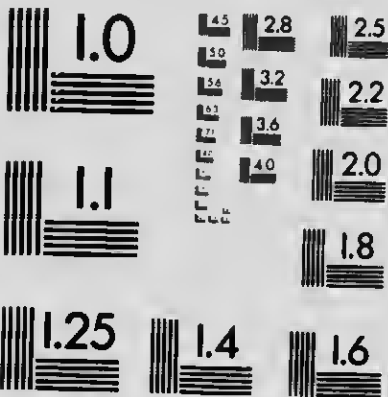
"We have *got* to win that Willoughby game, Josh," was the sternly delivered reply. "Oh, don't I wish you and I could get into it!"

"None for me, thank you. Life is too sweet. Don't underrate your team, old man. For a small college you have managed to get together a bunch of young corkers who play like eleven devils whenever things are going against them. Whichever way it turns out, Willoughby will feel that the game has been nothing short of a cyclone. Are you going to drill the team in any more fancy plays?"



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## THE HEAD COACH

"No. I have had to take too much time to hammer the fundamentals into them to risk addling their heads with a lot of trick formations at the last moment, Josh. My own team at New Haven won with straight old-fashioned foot-ball."

To follow the ball like so many hounds on a hot scent, to tackle hard and low with deadly, unfaltering precision, to be in every play, and to attack as one man, these were the basic tenets of the gospel of foot-ball as driven into this Jameson eleven day in and day out, in mud and rain, or with sunshine and springy turf. Kingsland cancelled the last preliminary game of the schedule because the other team was weaker than his own scrubs. He preferred to give his men no easily won victories. Joseph Pumpelly and several other players of rangy build and big-boned frames began to look gaunt and lean; but their nerves were unshaken, their eyes bright, and their sleep untroubled. The coach was vigilantly watching them for signs of overtraining, and he insisted that their study hours, recitations, and lectures be not slighted. The period of daily practice was curtailed little by little, and there was no signal practice in the evening. He wanted the men to come to the field in the high tide of vitality, like colts, not like cart-horses. Foot-ball must be sport, not drudgery, a game to be played for the sheer love of its hard knocks, excitements, and manly hazards.

## KINGSLAND'S VINDICATION

Other coaches had worked the team with increasing severity toward the end of the season. Kingsland's methods spread renewed uneasiness through the college. He was letting his men loaf on the eve of the championship contest. He must have lost all confidence in them. Such rumors travelled to the enemy's camp and were greedily believed. At length the campaign of training ended with the last hard practice two days before the great contest. The field was deserted next afternoon. Josh Yates carried the team off in his car, a half-dozen at a trip, and treated them to a luncheon, with an orchestra and a brace of vaudeville entertainers, at a famous road-house in the heart of the nearest mountains.

They returned to Spindle Falls in time for a farewell supper at the training table in the hotel. The coach surveyed the rows of grave young faces and knew their thoughts. Well, he had done all he could for them. They were his handiwork and they must endure the test alone. Even Josh Yates could not arouse spontaneous merriment on this night. More than one of the youths was wondering what the college was thinking of him. Would the old cheers ring out on the morrow for this team? Were they still considered usurpers?

Faint and far away the men at the table heard the strains of a marching song, the favorite chorus of Kappa Beta Alpha. It was drawing nearer, the



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lilting cadence rising and falling with thrilling effect. There was silence, and then, with greater volume, the players heard a large company of lusty voices shouting the favorite foot-ball song of the Jameson campus. In front of the hotel the singing ceased abruptly. The leader shouted something, and instantly the crowd responded with this stentorian cry in unison:

Jim—Jim—Jim! Jame—Jame—Jame!  
Jameson—Jameson is our name.  
Pumpelly—Pumpelly—Pumpelly!

On the heels of this outburst a high, cracked voice shrilled like a trumpet:

Wow—Wow—Wow!  
Chin—Chin—Chin!  
You young rascals!  
Whoop her up ag'in.

The players had rushed to the windows and beheld Deacon Ezra Stiles, his heels as high as his head, borne upon the shoulders of a quartet of Freshmen in triumphal procession. At sight of Kingsland and Pumpelly who ran out on the porch, the vociferous deacon kicked his way to earth and fled up the steps, while he announced:

"The scalawags caught me at the station, Mr. Kingsland, and run off with me, same as you see. I

## KINGSLAND'S VINDICATION

aimed to strike town to-night an' be fresh for the game, but they've rumped me up an' made me wind-broken and smashed my dignity all to blazes. Oh, yep, Martha is comin' along behind somewheres in a hack. What do you think of this for a hostile demonstration? All it needs is Johnny Hemphill. I spied that Lawrence Martin boy on the sidewalk, an' I made him come along and lead the cheerin'."

Josh Yates reached forth a long arm, plucked the deacon by the roots, as it were, and stood him upon a chair, while the crowd shouted glad approval. Joseph Pumpelly was blubbering outright. Why, here was half the college come to serenade him and wish him success as the captain of the Jameson eleven! And Lawrence Martin was one of the leaders of this overwhelming, unlooked-for ovation! It took hold of a fellow's heartstrings. It filled him with determination to do or die on the morrow. As for Kingsland, his lips quivered and he was not ashamed of it.

Deacon Ezra created a diversion by remarking, with immense satisfaction, to the world at large:

"There's always somethin' doin' when I come to town."

The friendly mob clamored for a speech from Captain Pumpelly, but he could find no more to say than this:

"This looks as if the college wasn't ashamed of

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us, and I tell you, fellows, you won't be to-morrow. If we make a good showing against Willoughby it will be due to Mr. Kingsland's work. And don't forget that."

The throng pressed nearer and began to cheer each man of the team by name, after which some one struck up a marching song and the ranks reformed, dancing, weaving, skipping down the narrow street in rhythmic, picturesque disorder.

Lawrence Martin lingered to say to Kingsland, with awkward hesitancy:

"I didn't intend to come along, but I am glad I did. I wish you luck to-morrow. I saw your final practice and it was great. It's the best team Jame-son ever had."

"No credit to his Uncle Johnay," wickedly murmured Deacon Ezra. "But it looks to me as if the boy was in a fair way to live him down."

Martin could not help smiling at this disrespectful sally and good-naturedly returned:

"The Dean will have to look after squaring himself. I can't take all the family troubles on my shoulders. But I am about ready to make all the apologies that even such a fire-eater as you may demand, Deacon Stiles. Jerry Hanscom isn't feeling any too proud of himself, but he has not quite yet screwed his nerve up to the point of facing the music."

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The deposed but repentant captain was about to join his friends in the street when a very well-dressed, slender youth made his way through the crowd, escorting a vivacious girl, who appeared to be taking command as he moved toward the hotel porch with more and more reluctance.

"This is surely the mourners' bench," said Lawrence Martin. "Here comes Wilbur Henderson, and his sister is bossing him as usual."

Very sheepishly Wilbur faced the coach and murmured a few words of introduction, at which Miss Katharine merrily explained:

"My brother almost ran away from me two or three times, Mr. Kingsland, but I coaxed him along, and as spokesman, I assure you that he is proud of the team and glad that he did not disrupt it."

"I guess that is about right," muttered the submissive brother, who was thoroughly cowed. Kingsland shook hands with him cordially and was glad that the wounds of the great rebellion were so nearly healed. To the sister he said with a gallant bow:

"I have heard how you befriended my cause, Miss Henderson. But for you we might have lost our mighty Joe Pumpelly. You shall have the formal thanks of the team and a set of engrossed resolutions."

"No thanks to me," quoth she, and added with an arch and dimpling smile, "Mildred Brewster was

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your good angel. And I think she would prefer the thanks of the coach to anything the team might say."

Kingsland colored and looked rather helpless, but Miss Katharine was merciful and forbore to tease him. Spying Joseph Pumpelly, who was gazing at her with the most undisguised admiration, she cried warmly:

"Brookfield is awfully proud of you, Joe. And to think you used to haul me uphill on your bob-sled to school when we were little tots! I saw your father this morning and he said that the whole family was coming in the morning."

Joseph fairly beamed. The fairy princess to whom he had paid homage from afar for years and years was publicly honoring him. Great thoughts surged in his mind. He was only a Freshman, and working his way through college at that, but Daniel Webster had been a farmer's son, and if a fellow had grit and ambition there was no stopping him, and—well, nevermind, more foolish dreams have come true than those which made the world all bright and wonderful to Joe Pumpelly.

"I haven't done anything to be proud of, Miss Katharine," said he. "I just made a nuisance of myself to almost everybody in college. It—it is just bully to t-think you are going to be at the game to-morrow. I'll p-play harder than ever, you can just bet."

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This frank tribute to the inspiring power of her presence seemed to please Katharine Henderson, and she replied with frank, winsome friendliness:

"If Wilbur has failed to appreciate you, his sister is not going to be guilty. I hope you will come and call when you are at home for the Thanksgiving vacation, Joe. I shall be delighted to see you. Good luck for to-morrow. You can't help winning, I am sure of it."

Like one in a pleasant trance, Joseph drifted away from the crowd to be alone with his thoughts, and might have been heard blissfully to murmur:

"Now wouldn't that make a man play foot-ball for his life! I just wonder if Mr. Kingsland felt all choked up like this when Mildred Brewster got over being mad and said nice things to him?"

Later in the evening, Kingsland, Josh Yates, and Deacon Stiles sat by the stove in the hotel smoking-room and talked intimately, as old friends are wont to confide in each other. Gazing affectionately at his beloved chum, Yates said, after a while:

"George, the coaches were sitting down-stairs, just as we are now, after the team had gone to bed, that night six years ago, when you went to them with the cable message—remember? There isn't one of these lads of *yours* with a yellow streak. You did a great deal for me that night. May I tell the story to Deacon Stiles?"

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"If you don't lay it on too thick," growled Kingsland. "You give me more credit than I deserve."

"Miss Brewster doesn't think so, George," said Yates. "She was talking to me about it the other day."

The coach was silenced, and Deacon Stiles grinned in his beard like a mischievous Kriss Kringle. Yates told the tale, and when he had done old Ezra exclaimed:

"That will just set Martha to snivellin'. Sorry she went to bed so soon. Well, if foot-ball teaches them kind of lessons, and lessons that stick like a cockle-burr, I take back all I ever said ag'in' it. I'm speakin' of your special brand of foot-ball, George Kingsland. And I guess Johnny Hemphill is thinkin' about the same thing by this time. I'm so excited that I sha'n't sleep a wink, but I think I'll go to bed. God bless you, George. Mason Corners is homesick for you."

The Willoughby game was to be played on the Jameson field this year, which made the coach's final ordeal the more trying and conspicuous. Alumni were flocking back from all quarters to listen with eager interest and divers sentiments to the campus versions of the season's dramatic episodes. Old players and former coaches shook their heads dubiously and predicted disaster, which gloomy opinions were to be expected because Kingsland,

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the iconoclast, had smashed precedent and upset tradition. If he were right, then these returning heroes of other days and ways were wrong, and they quite naturally expressed poor opinions of his radical methods. Their arguments duly impressed the undergraduates, who welcomed them to the several fraternity chapter houses during the forenoon of the great day, and one youth might be heard solemnly quoting to another:

“‘Dad’ Mercer, the captain of the team two years ago, says that we haven’t the ghost of a show to win to-day. He doesn’t understand how we let Kingsland spoil the eleven. ‘Dad’ would have been glad to coach these last couple of weeks, just to pull us out of the hole, but nobody asked him. Same way with ‘Scrapper’ Jones, the great half-back of last year. He expects to see Joe Pumpelly’s team of kids go in the air before the first half is over. He says you can’t turn out a consistent, reliable championship eleven without a backbone of veterans. Kingsland cut his own throat when he fired Lawrence Martin and the other fellows, ‘Scrapper’ Jones says.”

These depressing oracles were not permitted to invade the training quarters of the team, which made them more bilious than before. The coach was for having no funeral sermons preached in advance. His youngsters belonged to him until after the game. There was no scolding and berating them



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in the last moments before they left the gymnasium. They deserved only words of thanks and encouragement, and had no need to be lashed with the whip of anger to make them do their best. The coach gave them final instructions, quietly, earnestly, while they clustered about him in self-contained silence. When he had done speaking, Joseph Pumpelly told him:

"The fellows want you to know that if we are licked there will be no blaming the coach, sir. It will be our own fault."

"Thank you, boys," said he. "Now it is time to go on the field. No slugging, no kicking against officials. Play hard, but play fair, and keep your eye on the ball."

The little squad scampered from the building, and, running with mettlesome stride, skirted the long grandstand and vaulted the fence at one end of the field. To most of them the spectacle of the gala crowds, the noise of cheering, and the whole exciting pageantry of the surroundings were novel and thrilling. The Freshmen players wondered why their knees trembled and the ball slipped from their uncertain fingers as they began to practise passing and punting. This was stage fright in a mild form, and they felt happier when Josh Yates advanced from the side lines with a cheering word here, a careless jest there, and an affectionate thump on the back for Pumpelly.

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"You are not half as scared as I used to be," he exclaimed, with his reverberating laugh. "You will forget all about it after the first scrimmage. It is like shying from a cold tub. Jump in, boys; the water is fine. Willoughby is feeling the same way, and maybe more so!"

Just then the Willoughby team trotted into the arena, and Pumpelly's rather pallid comrades could have sworn that every man of them was eight feet high and four feet across the shoulders. This optical delusion is not uncommon. The Jameson captain muttered to himself, with a scowl:

"What in time makes them look so much bigger than we are? They average only five pounds more. I am sure of it. Well, the bigger the man the harder he will fall. Come on, fellows. I lost the toss. We take the west end of the field, and Willoughby has the ball on the kick-off."

The Jameson players swiftly scattered and waited, tense, statuesque, for the erratic flight of the booted ball into their territory. It came toward them in a low, long curve with a deal of power behind its puzzling trajectory. Before the Jameson full-back could run forward far enough to catch it in air, the wretched ball struck the turf, bounded crazily at an acute angle, and flew into the out-stretched arms of the quarter-back, who was caught off his guard. For an agonizing instant he juggled it, felt it escap-

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ing his clutches, dived forward, and beheld the elusive prize roll away from him toward the nearest side line.

Disaster menaced in a twinkling. Before Jameson could rally in this new direction, a fleet-footed Willoughby end rush, coming on the wings of the wind, had veered from his course and, dodging frantic efforts to block him, caught up the ball, with stride almost unchecked. He was a surprised youth, indeed, but he tarried not to thank his rivals for the priceless opportunity. The Jameson goal posts were near. A sinewy hand raked his back and tore his jersey, but missed holding him, as he ran scot-free, by a hair's-breadth! A second or two, no more, and he had crossed the last white line and crashed to earth under an avalanche of Jameson players, who overhauled him too late. He had scored a touch-down for Willoughby by a "fluke," five points to be overcome only by dint of battering, bruising exertion. Now, in truth, a fearful gloom overspread the Jameson supporters, and from one end of the grandstand to the other dismally echoed the variations of "I told you so." The foot-ball heroes of yore, the wise coaches and captains, had been sage prophets. No green team could survive being scored on in this demoralizing fashion. It was the beginning of the end. When the Willoughby captain deftly kicked the goal from a difficult angle

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of placement, the atmosphere was so funereal that Josh Yates was moved to hum, in a minor key:

They buried Brother Hezekiah  
In Brother Jonas's coat.

George Kingsland was standing with hands in pockets, chewing a straw and gazing stolidly at his men. They did not look beaten as they trotted back to mid-field, and the coach mumbled to Yates:

"Hard luck, wasn't it? That full-back of mine is the surest man on the team. Accidents will happen. Wait until they begin to hit the line."

A small boy scrambled over the fence, dodged the cordon of student police, and furtively handed to Kingsland something which was most carefully hidden in his cap.

"She told me to give 'em to you on the dead quiet," confided the urchin, jerking his thumb toward the grandstand.

Kingsland looked at the bunch of violets—Yale-blue violets—and his face brightened wonderfully. Rewarding the boy with prodigal largess, he tenderly pinned the flowers and their bow of ribbon, the colors of Jameson, upon his coat.

"Keep your eye on the ball," chided Yates. "I wish that eleven fair maidens would send eleven bunches of violets in a hurry to those young men of yours. They seem to chirk one up wonderfully."

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Kingsland had no time for persiflage. The rush lines were facing each other, the Jameson quarter-back sang out the signal for a run around right end, and the coach said to himself:

"Too soon to spring that kind of tactics. They ought to make a try between guard and tackle."

"All-Stummick Jim" Murchison, the red-headed little general that he was, had taken a chance on his own judgment; for in action he was a cool and crafty quarter-back, who was quick to shift his plans. An instant later the Jameson full-back was gathering speed behind his interlocked interference. The Willoughby men flung themselves headlong into the formation and checked its momentum; but, ere they could demolish it, Joseph Pumpelly had circled from his position as guard, moving with a clumsy, headlong gallop at an astonishing speed, and was yanking the runner clear of the ruck by the hair of his head. The Willoughby end and tackle had been fairly boxed, and the back, who threw himself in Pumpelly's path, was sent spinning by the sweep of a long arm that smote him like a flail. Together the slender, agile Jameson full-back and the towering, raw-boned captain shot clear and straightened their course toward the Willoughby goal posts. They had practised this system of interference day after day, until their strides matched as one man, and, convoyed close beside the captain, the full-

## KINGSLAND'S VINDICATION

back looked as if he were being abducted by a giant.

One after the other two Willoughby men, playing well back as the outer line of defence, strove to smash through the lone-handed interference of Joseph Pumpelly, but he swept them heels over head with his stout shoulder and his oak limb of an arm. There was no overtaking them in the rear, for the captain was phenomenally fast for his height and bulk and his companion was the best sprinter of the track athletic team. As they neared their splendid destination, the youth with the ball began to falter, as if the edge of his speed were dulled. Then Joseph clutched him by one arm and towed him onward, until the twain fell panting at the end of their course. Jameson had made honors even in the matter of touch-downs.

For a long, breathless moment the crowd gazed dumfounded, as if unable to realize the incredibly swift change of fortune. Then one prolonged shout resounded from both sides of the field, and no one made more noise than those captious critics who had been so ready to foretell defeat. The coach flung his hat in air and picked it up rather sheepishly, as if ashamed of his undignified exuberance. Then Josh Yates insisted on hugging him with an embrace that would have done no small credit to an able-bodied grizzly.

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"There's a quarter-back with more foot-ball brains than I have," exclaimed the coach. "He guessed that Willoughby would not expect us to use our full-back until he had time to steady himself after misjudging that fatal kick-off. They were fooled completely, and Pumpelly was simply great. I never saw him get over the ground as fast as that."

"The greenhorns will now proceed to show them a few things," replied Yates. "Ah, your full-back kicked a neat goal that time. Six points each, and Jameson growing stronger every minute."

There was to be no more easy scoring for either team. Willoughby was unable to make decisive advances because of the fiery, accurate tackling of the Jameson men which ripped the most aggressive formations to bits. On the other hand, the Jameson offensive tactics were checked before the concerted assaults could carry the ball within striking distance of the enemy's goal. Trick plays were fiercely smothered before they could be got under way, and the continuous shock and stress of hammering at one rush line and then the other were both exhausting and provocative of ill temper.

In other years there had been rough play and bad blood between the elevens of the two colleges, and Willoughby had been coached with this tradition in mind. The first half was nearing its close when the visitors were twice penalized for holding

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and roughness, which served to make them sullen and angered. At length a Willoughby tackle, in a fit of rage at being thrown in his tracks with a jar that made him dizzy, kicked out viciously from where he lay at the edge of the scrimmage, and drove his heavy, cleated shoe full into the face of prostrate Joseph Pumpelly. It so happened that neither official saw the episode, but it was clearly visible from the altitude of the grandstand whereupon the Jameson partisans were massed.

The captain staggered to his feet and reeled to and fro, his face besmeared with blood. Kingsland and a physician, ready with his surgical kit, ran to help, and found that Pumpelly's lip was badly gashed and several teeth loosened.

"Stick some plaster on it and don't delay the game," the victim sputtered thickly. "He hit me a pretty hard crack."

From every side came angry cries, and spectators began to crowd on the field to take the law into their own hands. The officials protested in vain that they had no means of proving that the injury had been intentional, and refused point-blank to remove the offender from the game. Kingsland knew otherwise, but he had no right to interfere. Now was the time to show the doubters that manliness and discipline were essential qualities of reputable foot-ball. Calling to his players, he told them to drive the mob



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from the field, said mob obeying with lively recollection of a similar command early in the coach's career at Jameson. Pumpelly's battered countenance twisted in a painful grin as he lowered a dripping sponge and croaked:

"It's all in the game, boys. A Willoughby crowd mobbed our team once, but we don't do things that way any more. I'm all right. Play ball."

Quick to sense the spirit of fair play and sportsmanship in this attitude of coach and captain, the fickle throng cheered itself hoarse and felt a new pride in its eleven. When the half ended with no more scoring, Kingsland followed the team to the dressing-room, and found Deacon Ezra Stiles wagging his beard in Pumpelly's face and telling him:

"I ain't got no business in here now, an' I know it. But I just run over to tell you that I was settin' close by Johnny Hemphill, an' when you told your boys to shet up an' play ball he looked as tickled as a setter pup. It was druv into his head at last that the new era of foot-ball in his college means somethin' toward makin' men. Now, I'm goin' back to Martha before you throw me out. Hello, Parson. Martha sends her love to you, an' is real pleased with your team, though she shrieked some when Joseph got all bloodied up. Women is so soft-hearted, ain't they?"

## KINGSLAND'S VINDICATION

Scooting under Kingsland's arm as if expecting to be chastised for his invasion, the deacon retreated at full speed. The coach looked at his weary players for a moment, and said:

"You don't feel lively, I know; but the other fellows feel worse. They are not in as fit condition as you are, for one thing. You must play them off their feet next half. Don't spare yourselves for a moment. And remember this, too, that one touch-down will be enough. Bang right in, score as soon as you can, and then take no chances, but hold them safe. Don't lay for that tackle that kicked Pumpy, don't slug him on any account, but aim your heavy plays at him and he will weaken. I know his breed. That is all."

In another room of the gymnasium the Willoughby coaches were storming at their men, spurring them with much bad language, and asserting that Jameson had shot her bolt and must be routed in short order. This estimate was wide of the mark. No sooner had the teams clashed, in the opening line-up of the last half, than Jameson began to drive the ball down the field with the slow, resistless impact of a steam roller. It was not brilliant foot-ball but it was the winning kind. The work of the long, weary weeks was focused in every plunging charge that gained its distance. There was no more fumbling, no signs of nervousness. The Willoughby

## THE HEAD COACH

tackle who had disgraced his team began to flinch from these battering-ram attacks that ploughed over him and left him sick and dazed and spent. At length he dragged himself from the game and a substitute took his place. Then the assaults shifted to the centre, where Joseph and his tall comrades ripped holes for the backs to go lunging through, to sprawl their length on the torn and furrowed turf.

Yard by yard the Willoughby team was pushed back until it was making its last stand in the shadow of its own goal posts, staggered and broken by the slow, steadfast onset of its rivals. Another breathless signal and Pumpelly dropped back, snatched the ball from the straining quarter-back, and hurled himself straight into the fighting mass of contestants, which heaved and parted as if split asunder by a huge projectile. Five clear yards he went before he could be dragged down, three men clinging to his legs and waist. No need to wait for the official verdict. The Jameson players were dancing like wild men. The on-looking throng was shouting with din infernal. The captain lay with the ball jammed into his stomach and laughed to himself. His team had obeyed orders to the letter. The coveted touch-down was theirs.

The touch-down had not been won by one man, but by eleven striving as one. They had been fashioned into a harmonious mechanism, the whole being

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Five clean yards he went before he could be dragged down, three men clinging to his legs and waist.



## KINGSLAND'S VINDICATION

the sum of its parts. At the proper moment the team had found itself and achieved precisely what it was expected to do. Such supreme efforts stand alone. Mind kindles matter and lends it power to do more than strength of body can hope to accomplish. Thus an army is swayed by the master mind, flings itself against an impregnable position—and captures it. Foot-ball is "mimic warfare" in that much depends on the general and the quality of allegiance to an ideal. This Jameson eleven, by this one feat, had become a company of veterans. They had survived the breaking strain and knew what *the team* stood for.

They did not score again. Confident in their defensive strength, they held firm against Willoughby and beat back one angry, desperate attack after another until the long shadows crept across the field. Kingsland had no fears for them. Only a cruel mischance could snatch victory now. And there were no more "flukes."

A whistle piped a long blast, and the referee tossed his cap in air. The game was over. As if a spring had been touched, the Jameson players ran together in a compact bunch, flung their arms around one another's necks, and cheered for Willoughby with whatever breath they had to spare. The beaten visitors returned the compliment, rather feebly, it is true; and then the undergraduates swept down

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from their seats, poured across the field in a clamorous torrent, and hoisted the heroes to as many shoulders as could find room.

Kingsland evaded the crowd that was for honoring him in the same helter-skelter fashion, and hurried toward the gymnasium. Duty called him to see to it that the players were properly cared for before he went elsewhere. But he was not looking back at their triumphal approach; he was gazing down at the violets pinned on his coat, the violets of Yale blue.

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## CHAPTER XV

### SOMETHING BETTER THAN FOOT-BALL

A BANQUET in celebration of the great and glorious victory was hastily organized for that very evening. The town was ransacked for fireworks, and the supply running short soon after dark, one party of frenzied Freshmen purchased a barrel of lamp chimneys and hurled them against the front of the hotel, where they smashed with the most delightful racket. Jameson College was on the edge of delirium, and timid citizens of Spindle Falls bolted the shutters early, the most prudent unhinging their front gates and stowing them in the wood-shed for safe-keeping. The students erased from their volatile memories all the hard things that had been said about the coach. His apotheosis was violent and complete. Like Mr. Dooley of the topical song, he was "the greatest man the country ever knew." The former coaches and captains, who had been honored as prophets of evil, now found themselves objects of derisive laughter.



## THE HEAD COACH

Suffice it to say on this point that even Dean Hemphill was a guest at the banquet. Thus the last rebel came into camp and laid down his arms, and with very good grace at that. Of course Deacon Stiles held a place of high honor, but he could not have been kept away. These two boyhood friends of Howland village sat side by side in amiable discourse, and the deacon, generous toward a fallen foe, made no more threats nor showed the smallest symptoms of playing the rôle of lion tamer. The team, considerably bruised and dreadfully sleepy, broke training on coffee, pie, and sweetmeats, and was blissfully content with life. There were speeches from everybody, no end of them, and much cheering, somewhat husky and broken because of the wear and tear of the afternoon's uproar, and all kinds of rollicking, old-fashioned songs. Deacon Stiles aired his lively impressions of foot-ball in a rambling dissertation, toward the end of which he suddenly waxed sentimental, and, dragging a fragment of poetry from the limbo of his memory, he raised a glass on high, gazed knowingly at Kingsland, and declaimed:

I fill this cup to one made up  
Of loveliness alone;  
A woman of her gentler sex  
The seer'in' paragon.  
Her health! And would on earth there stood  
Some more of such a——

## SOMETHING BETTER THAN FOOT-BALL

Here Kingsland pulled him down by the coat-tails, fearing that the paragon might not be left nameless if the deacon were allowed to continue.

"How did you know I wa'n't drinkin' a toast to Martha Stiles?" scolded the aged victim of this unprovoked assault. "'Pears to me you are very touchy this evenin', Mr. Kingsland."

The coach had the grace to blush, and switched the topic by calling for a speech from Dean Hemphill, who arose majestically, coughed, frowned like Olympian Jove himself, and sonorously confessed:

"I am heartily pleased with the Jameson eleven, its captain, and its coach. I congratulate you, gentlemen, one and all. Your conduct this afternoon was manly and self-restrained, your playing was clean and strenuous, and you won a most worthy and deserved victory. In spite of clashes of policy which gave rise to certain—ahem—certain misunderstandings earlier in the season, I am convinced, after thorough investigation, that the tone of the college will be bettered for the work of this foot-ball team. I have tried to be fair in handling a somewhat difficult problem, and, while I did not approve of the new methods in some ways, I shall find no fault with them in the light of results. In returning to his parish, Mr. Kingsland will carry with him my best wishes for success."

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As soon as the applause subsided, Deacon Ezra observed, in a stage whisper:

"Handsomely done Johnny. You surely do know how to eat crow with as much grace an' appetite as if it was turkey. The boys'll like you for it. You've got a better grip on this college than you ever had before."

The hour was not late when the guests began to drift from the dining-room, some to join the war dance around a great bonfire on the campus, while the weary players agreed that earth held no more solid joy than going straightway to bed. Kingsland safely delivered the deacon to waiting Martha Stiles, after which he drifted into Yates's room, and for some time the twain sat talking over the episodes of the day. The coach felt fagged in mind and body. The burden and heat of the foot-ball campaign were past, and success was his reward, beyond all expectations; yet the experience was only an incident in a man's real work in the world, and in this mood of reaction it made him unhappy to think that he was a better coach than minister. The Mason Corners parish was the measure of his ability in his profession. At any rate, he had learned that the people of his church thought much of him, and he was both loyal and grateful. From a haze of cigar smoke, Josh Yates at length spoke what was revolving in his own mind:

## SOMETHING BETTER THAN FOOT-BALL

"You are in the throes of a mental slump, George. I read it in your melancholy blue eyes. A night's sleep will make you smile again. When do you expect to go home?"

"To-morrow afternoon, to be there for Sunday services. I am glad and I am sorry to leave this place, Josh. It has been the best fight I ever made."

"See here, George," and Yates began to walk the floor. "It has done me some good to play the game with you, and I wish with all my heart we could continue our team-work in a bigger game. My proposition still holds. Come out to Colorado with me and let me build that church for you. Preach your gospel to my miners and ranchers and cow-punchers. They appreciate your kind of man, as I told you before. You are lost, shelved, in this worn-out, depopulated corner of New England."

"No, thank you, Josh. My work here is only begun. I have made good as a foot-ball coach, but not yet as a minister. I should feel like a quitter to be tempted away at this time. What would my people think? That you had bought my services under contract because you are rich and they are poor. I cannot do it, Josh—not now."

"But you are in love," argued the other. "If you are lucky enough to win the girl, what then? Are you going to ask her to live in Mason Corners, bury

## THE HEAD COACH

her alive in respectable but acute poverty on your wretched pittance of an income? You can't do it, old man. You have not come down to earth long enough to face the practical future."

"My father had a five-hundred dollar parish when he married mother, and there never was a happier bride," said Kingsland. "But of course that was long ago, when the living problem was much simpler. You are taking too much for granted, Josh. When it comes to any prospect of matrimony, I am no more than a forlorn hope. What do you say to going to bed?"

"Good enough. No wonder the Dean thought you were obstinate and unreasonable, 'Deacon.' In my honest estimation, you and he have dispositions astonishingly alike."

Next morning Kingsland was engaged for a considerable time in chatting with the members of the eleven, who sought him in his room or waylaid him on the campus to bid him farewell in words of boyish, sincere homage and affection. It was almost noon when he spied Deacon Ezra Stiles gazing into the show-windows of a dry-goods store. The old man explained most meekly:

"Martha had some shoppin' to do, so we decided to wait until this afternoon and go home on the train with you. She's in there now. She's been in there forty minutes by the watch, and she told me to

## SOMETHING BETTER THAN FOOT-BALL

wait five minutes. I'm more leg-weary than I was after the celebration last night. By the way, I met President Stellwagon this morning. He seemed real glad to see me. I wanted to pay him my respects an' sort of explain matters for makin' so free with the Dean of the college. I thought he might have heard about it."

"And what did the President have to say?" asked Kingsland.

"He is a nice, mild old gentleman, ain't he? He spoke very well of you, which made him popular with me. He wants to see you before you go—asked me to take word to you, seein' as I told him I was sure to find you somewheres before long."

"Thank you. I will walk over to his house at once. You and Mrs. Stiles will have dinner with me at the hotel, of course. Yates will be there, if I am a bit late."

The deacon resumed his patient pose of waiting in front of the show-window, and Kingsland went to the home of the President in the quiet street that led past the library and the Hall of Arts. Here Dr. Stellwagon dwelt in a cloistered atmosphere, the scholarly old gentleman bearing a weight of years and infirmities with uncomplaining gentleness of temper, beloved of those students who were so fortunate as to know him well. He greeted Kingsland with marked cordiality, and said:

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"I am perhaps too old-fashioned in my notions, my dear young man, to realize the importance of athletics in the modern scheme of education. I have learned, however, that your influence among my young men has been most wholesome and manly, and I regret that you can be no longer with them. It seemed to me incongruous that a clergyman should take foot-ball so seriously, as an allied profession, so to speak, but you appear to have convinced the college otherwise. What I have particularly in mind to say is that many persons of our community have recently expressed the wish to hear you as a clergyman before you return to your home. In fact, several of the officials of the College Place Congregational Church have mentioned the matter to me during the last week. The Reverend Mr. Whittaker has been compelled to go away for his health—a nervous breakdown which came without warning. Our pulpit will be vacant on Sunday next. If your own parishioners can spare you for that day, I am sure that the college and the townspeople will be most glad to hear you."

"Thank you with all my heart, sir, but I have promised to be in Mason Corners," said Kingsland, much gratified by this honor.

"Your senior deacon, Mr. Stiles, is still in town, I believe," suggested the President. "Perhaps he will consider the matter unselfishly."

## SOMETHING BETTER THAN FOOT-BALL

"I will confer with him and bring you word, si.," Kingsland replied. "I should be delighted. I would rather not have the college remember me only as a foot-ball coach. Mr. Whittaker has broken down, you say?"

"Worn out by overwork—in need of rest and change," answered the President, with much gravity; but there was the faintest suspicion of mirth in his mild eyes. Perhaps the Dean had kept him better informed than Kingsland knew. Each thought his own thoughts and made no more mention of Jared Whittaker.

Kingsland posted off to find Deacon Stiles, who was discovered tottering toward the hotel, both arms filled with bundles, and muttering anathemas against "shoppin' tours." Kingsland had the tact to permit the distressed deacon to unload and recover breath before relating his interview with the President.

"I thought as much," said Ezra. "He was sort of fishin' around when he talked to me. Well, we humble folks of yourn ain't goin' to stand in your way. It's a fine thing to be asked to preach a sermon in a fashionable city church that's top-heavy with college culture to boot. Rest your mind easy. The village will be disappointed, but I'll straighten 'em out. We can hold the 'supply' another Sunday, I guess. Sorry Martha and me can't wait over to hear you, but we've come to the end of our spree.



## THE HEAD COACH

Don't be afraid of 'em. Plain, straight talk, without frills, will be mighty refreshin' after Jared Whittaker's flowery fandangoes. So he hasn't stopped runnin' yet!"

That evening Kingsland fought with his desire to see Mildred Brewster. What if he should come to grief in the pulpit to-morrow, prove unequal to his task, make the College Place Church regret having invited him thither? His old uncertainty of self and painful trepidation returned in full tide. Who was he, to think of asking this girl to marry him? What could he offer her? Josh Yates was right. After all, this foot-ball and his part therein, which had won for him favor in her sight, was the one conspicuous incident of his commonplace career. He had been dreaming dreams. The awakening had come to torment him with a sense of his unworthiness. No, he must not go to see her again except to say good-by, stammer some kind of an apology for his presumption, and thank her for her exceeding kindness to him.

On Sunday morning the church was filled to the doors, curiosity the motive of many of the congregation, while the undergraduates seemed to have turned out en masse, the foot-ball team being accommodated in three pews well toward the front. Mildred Brewster was there, and Kingsland saw her as soon as he arose to announce the first hymn. With

## SOMETHING BETTER THAN FOOT-BALL

one quick glance he read in her face a confidence and encouragement that knew no doubts. She was not afraid for him. Her presence was an inspiration. Timidity and awkwardness forsook him, and he felt that he was braced to say what was in his mind, with no faltering or stumbling. When it was time for him to begin his sermon, he spoke with simple, direct sincerity, forgetting himself, anxious above all else to convince these hundreds of young men that what he said was true and vital, and to be lived in word and deed, if they were to make the most of themselves. His own creed was summed up in the text he had chosen:

“Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering, for He is faithful that promised.

“And let us consider one another, to provoke unto love and good works.”

The sermon was not notable for eloquence or elegance of diction. It lacked the ornate flourishes of Jared Whittaker's discussion of the Higher Criticism, but it was builded upon the bed rock of personal conviction and it went straight to the hearts of men. To the listening students, the speaker was one of them, and they had seen him tested. The pulpit was not a barrier to them nor this kind of religion something set apart. And their elders felt refreshed and strengthened to meet their daily toil and temptations. Kingsland realized that he had been given grace to

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preach more convincingly on this day than ever before in his life.

The foot-ball team waited for him outside the church, and Joseph Pumpelly, as spokesman, voiced the common sentiment:

"You can preach as well as you can coach, Mr. Kingsland, and that is saying an awful lot. I never saw the side lines—I mean the pews—so full of students before. Can't you get off and come back for a Sunday or two this winter? If you don't, the team is going to run over to Mason Corners some Sunday and surprise you."

Kingsland was more grateful for this ingenuous praise than if he had won a dozen foot-ball championships, and said so.

"You are coming back to coach next year?" anxiously asked two or three of the players at once.

"I don't know. I can't promise. I ought not to be away from my parish for so long again."

"Jameson can't get along without you next season," declared Joseph Pumpelly.

A fortnight after Kingsland's return to Mason Corners, the village was invaded by no less dignified a body than that same "ministerial committee" from Spindle Falls which had once journeyed to New Haven in search of a pastor. These worthy gentlemen were just a trifle sheepish, as if they had seen

## SOMETHING BETTER THAN FOOT-BALL

their judgments confounded, but they lost no time in setting about their appointed task. Finding Kingsland in his quarters at the boarding-house, the chairman vouchsafed in measured tones:

"A letter has come to us, from our Mr. Whittaker, of the most surprising nature. He sends us his resignation, with the request that it be accepted at once and without argument. Extraordinary, is it not? When he was granted a leave of absence on the ground of ill health, it was taken for granted that he intended returning to us."

The chairman peered over his glasses at the other members of the committee, as if inviting comment, before he went on to say:

"The departure of Mr. Whittaker need not be discussed in more detail at this time. Suffice it to say that the College Place Church is without a pastor. You impressed our congregation most favorably when you filled our pulpit recently. Permit me to say that you have developed remarkably since you left the Divinity School. Jameson College seems to admire you greatly, sir. In fact, the officials of the church are anxious to make its work more effectual among the students. It is a field of great promise. You appear to have won the confidence and regard of these hundreds of young men in a most remarkable degree. To be brief, Mr. Kingsland, the committee is empowered to offer you a call to the pastorate of

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the College Place Church, to take effect at the earliest convenience of yourself and your present parish."

Kingsland did not know what to say. Loyalty was one of his strongest qualities, and mere dollars could not have tempted him to consider leaving Mason Corners. But this splendid opportunity to work and to live shoulder to shoulder with three hundred young men, a field of endeavor which he loved best, and in which he had proved himself to be of signal service, was not to be disregarded. It beckoned him alluringly. He could not play the laggard with such a trumpet call as this. It was one of his dearest dreams come true. His voice was unsteady with emotion as he made answer:

"This is an honor that I had not looked for, gentlemen. I cannot make my decision at a moment's notice. I must consult my parish. A man never had better friends than I have gained in Mason Corners. Their interests are mine. I cannot desert them until a successor is found to their liking."

Shortly after this memorable interview, the deacons of the Mason Corners Church assembled in session extraordinary. Kingsland told them the tidings, and they sat mute and sorrowful, realizing that they must let him go from them, yet unwilling to face the issue. At length Deacon Ezra Stiles arose and said, as bravely as he was able:

## SOMETHING BETTER THAN FOOT-BALL

"I seen it comin', brethren, but I kept my mouth shet. 'Time enough to cross the bridge when we come to it,' I says to Martha the day after we come back from Spindle Falls. We'll have to tell him to go, and God bless him. An' we mustn't be grudgin' and selfish about it and make him unhappy. He has growed too big for us, that's all. And they need him over yonder wuss than we do, tho' I don't know what we're goin' to do without him. He ain't acceptin' the call because they can pay him a lot of more salary. We know better'n that. He's been promoted, that's what it amounts to; and we can't hold him back by the coat-tails like a passel of mean-spirited gumps."

Deacon Stiles wiped his eyes and then slumped into his seat. In his own way he had expressed the opinions of his companions. With heavy hearts, yet all ungrudgingly, as Ezra had exhorted them, they voted to permit their pastor to resign in his own good time. After the meeting Kingsland walked home with Ezra, and Martha welcomed them at the kitchen door. The warm, homely comfort of the place was very cheering, and the deacon banished his long face and plucked up heart to say:

"It's all for the best, mother, ain't it? I'm glad I went over and spoke up for him and put Johnny Hemphill in his place. I didn't know I was cuttin' off my own nose an' helpin' our minister to remove

## THE HEAD COACH

himself from our midst, but I'd do it over again if I had the chance. You can't keep a good man down."

The deacon rubbed his spectacles, chased the cat under the stove, and began to look for his red slippers. Then his beard waggled to show that he was chuckling inwardly. Cocking his head on one side, he winked at Kingsland and cackled uproariously:

"What on earth has struck you now?" implored Martha.

"Oh, nuthin'. Mr. Kingsland hasn't said much about it, but has it occurred to you, mother, that we won't have to fix up a parsonage for him? The College Place Church folks will be doin' that before long, an' he'll have salary enough to keep two on."

"Ain't you ashamed, Ezra!" she cried severely.

"Fur's we know, the minister ain't declared himself yet."

"When are you goin' to Spindle Falls for a flyin' trip, Mr. George Kingsland?" asked Ezra, with the air of an arch-inquisitor. "There ain't a train out of here before to-morrow mornin'."

"Yes, I shall go to-morrow morning," said Kingsland, and his face was eloquent beyond all words.

"No foot-ball this time, my dear, dear people. I am going straight to find the girl I love and ask her to marry me."

"I'll bet the price of a good hoss I can guess her

**SOMETHING BETTER THAN FOOT-BALL**

answer. Tell her that Mason Corners sends hearty congratulations," cried Deacon Ezra. "I should call it a highly successful foot-ball season all round, hey, Martha?"

**THE END**





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